



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

A STUDY OF PROVISION FOR SPECIFIC LEARNING
DIFFICULTIES (DYSLEXIA) IN PRIMARY EDUCATION
IN THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

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the University of Birmingham

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

This is a case study of two mainstream primary schools in one city in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) in order to investigate the educational provision for students with SpLD. The aim of the study was to identify the provision for students with SpLD with the aim to contribute to policy development with regard to special educational needs (SEN). Nineteen participants were selected using purposive sampling, comprising regular and SEN teachers, parents, students with SpLD and one officer from the Ministry of Education (MoE). Data was collected through interviews, observation and document analysis. The emerging themes from the data were coded and analysed with the use of constructivist approach together with Frith (1995) as a theoretical framework. The data from this study suggested that although the Saudi Government has initiated programmes for the support of students with SpLD, these programmes were only used in a few selected schools and could only cater for limited number of students with SpLD. The study further suggested that students with SpLD were marginalised due to other factors such as negative attitudes towards including them in the mainstream classrooms.

Keywords: Biological Perspective, Cognitive Perspective, Behavioural Perspective, Dyslexia, SpLD, Inclusive Education.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my mother, to someone who is very special and always has been there during difficult times. I dedicate this thesis to my brothers and sisters and to all my family.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BDA	British Dyslexia Association
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DBI	Dyslexia Belief Index
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
IEP	Individual educational plan
IQ	Intelligence quotient
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
KAU	King Abdul-Aziz University
LD	Learning disability
LEA	Local education authority
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment
MLD	Moderate learning difficulties
MoE	Ministry of Education
PMLD	Profound and multiple learning difficulties
RESPI	Regulations for Special Education Programs and Institutes
RtI	The Responsiveness to Intervention
SAS	Supervisory Attentional System
SEN	Special educational needs
SEND	Special educational needs and disability
SENDO	Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005
SLD	Specific learning disability
SLD	Severe learning difficulties
SpLD	Specific learning difficulties/ dyslexia
UoB	University of Birmingham

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Organization of thesis

For the better understanding of the research problem and accomplishment of the research aim and the objectives of this study, this thesis is divided into eight chapters, including the introduction chapter. The first chapter provides the rationale for the study, the research background and the context. In this chapter I provide the reason for choosing this subject for my investigation. The aim of this study and the research questions are also discussed in this chapter.

In Chapter 2 I discuss the theoretical framework adopted for this study by focusing on the biological, cognitive, and behavioural theories of dyslexia. Frith's (1995) framework for understanding dyslexia, which forms the basis for data collection and analysis, is discussed in detail; her perspective for understanding dyslexia provided the initial themes for data analysis.

Chapter 3 highlights in detail the Saudi context with regard to development of education from a historical perspective, and the position of my study with regard to Islamic beliefs. The chapter then highlights the social model of disability and the concept of specific learning difficulties (SpLD) /dyslexia in KSA. The aim of this chapter is to provide a clear understanding of the research context which was essential in forming the basis for the study.

Chapter 4 provides a comprehensive methodological framework for the study. It sets out the research approach and design, and methods for data collection and

analysis of data collected through interviews, document analysis and observations. Ethical considerations for the study are also covered in this chapter.

Chapter 5 comprises data analysis and presentation, following the approaches explained in the methodology chapter. The chapter focuses on the emerging themes from the data gathered from the participants and from documents, including from observations.

In Chapter 6 I focus on the implications of the theoretical framework for the study. In the chapter I analyse data in relation to the three perspectives from Frith's model of understanding dyslexia (1995): the biological, the cognitive and the behavioural perspectives.

Chapters 7 and 8 contain the discussion and conclusion. The conclusion chapter includes the recommendations following the findings of the study as well as the methods for disseminating the research findings.

1.2 Rationale of the study

Formal education, especially the emphasis on the ability to read and write as a tool for promoting Islamic religion, brought about a great revolution in the Middle Eastern countries, including KSA, where Islam is the predominant religion (House, 2012). What started as a means of promoting Islam resulted in the current modern education in the region (House, 2012). However, where on one hand, Islam and other religions encourage education and literacy as a means of propagating their doctrines, on the other hand, a range of other factors may have a negative effect on the endeavour. For example specific learning difficulties can make literacy lessons challenging for students with SpLD.

My study examines the provisions for students with SpLD in primary schools, in one city in KSA. The study is important in that it provides a view on the current situation in KSA with regard to the support given to students with SpLD. This study is significant in that it aims to provide the basis for the development of educational policies, which would focus on awareness and inclusion of students with SpLD, and consequently lead to reduced exclusion from the mainstream school system.

1.3 Research background: key issues regarding dyslexia in KSA

There are several specific learning difficulties which include dyspraxia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, dyslexia and other learning difficulties. Individual learners with these difficulties are unable to read, write or comprehend mathematical problems smoothly (British Dyslexia Association, 2007). Among these difficulties, dyslexia is recognised as a highly prevalent learning difficulty in the eastern as well as western countries of the world and can be found in all age groups from children to adults (Elbeheri et al., 2006).

Westwood (2013) indicates that teachers of students with learning problems in inclusive settings are confronted with a range of issues like challenging behaviour in the classrooms, cultural pressures, additional teaching workload, regulatory requirements which they are expected to perform, and parental expectations as well as inadequate time and resources to be able to support such learners (Hussain, 2009). According to Al-Mousa (2010), some of these challenges, including overcrowded classroom and increasing diversity of multilingual and multicultural classes are common in most Asian and Middle Eastern countries, including KSA.

Faced with such challenges, in KSA teachers find it difficult to identify the students with SpLD and give them the support required for them to achieve their full potential (Al-Mousa, 2010). In some cases, children with SpLD are considered by teachers and parents as 'backward', 'stupid', 'lazy' and 'inattentive', which adversely affects their difficulties (Riddick, 1996; Gwernan-Jones and Burden, 2010). This can result in a child becoming withdrawn, or developing behavioural problems (Afeafe, 2000; Al-Khateeb and Hadidi, 2010). This key point highlights the critical aspect about the lack of awareness and support for children with dyslexia in KSA and other Arabic countries.

Western countries have made efforts to make suitable provisions for such students in order to help them to deal with their difficulties. For example, in England the special educational needs and disability (SEND) Code of Practice (Department for Education, 2015) lays down guidelines for the provision for children with SEN, which all stakeholders, including teachers, school heads, educational authorities, regulatory bodies, and parents should adhere to. Such provisions include programmes for children with dyslexia (Dyslexia Action, 2012).

The current philosophy in the educational provision is that children, regardless of their individual differences, including children with SEN, should be educated in an inclusive setting; the efforts made by the KSA are also commendable in this regard. For example, the Saudi Arabian national provision for students with SEN is based upon the three-tier systems that support children with special needs by targeting their individual needs. Tier-1 is focused on early identification and quality classroom teaching for the students with transient or mild learning difficulties. Tier-

2 is developed for additional support for students with persistent learning difficulties, and Tier-3 is aimed to offer intensive individualised support for students with severe learning difficulties (Al-Mousa, 2010; Alquraini, 2013).

1.4 Research context

In KSA, programmes designed for students with literacy difficulties are known as ‘learning disabilities programmes’ (Ministry of Education, 2013). They normally emphasise awareness and inclusion of children with a learning disability (LD). According to the SEN policy in the KSA, students with dyslexia are categorised as students with LD, which is basically a general term for children experiencing significant difficulties in learning, and so the terms SpLD or dyslexia are never used (Al-Hano, 2006; Alquraini, 2011). As I stated earlier, SpLD is an umbrella term for various learning difficulties, and my focus in this study is on children with dyslexia.

Another issue worth mentioning regarding this study, which had an effect in sampling of participants is the gendered educational context of KSA. In KSA, there are no mixed schools for girls and boys. Also, as a female researcher, I could only access schools with girl students and female teachers. Furthermore, I could only interview mothers and female relatives. In that case references to children, teachers and parents in this study refer to females only.

A study by Al-Mousa (2010) shows that the lack of awareness about SpLD in KSA is one of the underlying factors affecting people’s perception about children with SpLD such that parents and teachers who have no knowledge about SpLD link the children’s difficulties with conditions related to mental health issues and

superstition. For example, parents of children with disability are usually stigmatized by the society (Al-Jadid, 2013) which views it as a curse or a punishment by God, as a result of the disability exhibited by children with SpLD, which is normally manifested by poor performance in schools compared to their peers. Such children in some cases may not be sent to school and parents may deny that their child needs extra help, like other children with a disability (Fletcher et al., 2002; Hussain, 2009; Al-Mousa, 2010).

Despite the existence of SEN policy, which regulates the programmes for children with learning disabilities, the country is yet to provide sufficient support to students with SpLD. This can be attributed to several factors. First, in KSA, educational provisions for students with literacy difficulties are not offered in all primary schools in the country; instead, the Ministry of Education (MoE) selects and offers support to students with literacy difficulties in just a few schools. The selection of these schools is based on certain criteria set by the MoE (Al-Mousa, 2010). The criteria are discussed in Chapter three.

Second, the classroom teachers in the selected schools lacked the knowledge and skills regarding how to identify and support students with SpLD. In KSA, although there are students with SpLD in primary schools, identification, assessment and awareness of SpLD is problematic due to lack of trained personnel in the field (Al-Ahmadi, 2009; Alquraini, 2011). Due to limited knowledge of dyslexia, teachers tend to have negative attitudes towards learners with dyslexia in KSA (Hornstra et al., 2010); as a result, children who perform poorly are most likely to be excluded by teachers (Hussain, 2009).

All these issues, as well as this researcher's personal experience in the Saudi Arabian primary education system, substantiate the fact that current support programmes for students with SpLD in the context do not meet the needs of students with SpLD. The introduction and specification of the role of SEN teacher is recognised as a significant approach, recommended by the Saudi Arabian government, yet general observation suggests that students with SpLD enrolled in such programmes struggle with literacy and are only able to gain low-level literacy skills. All these challenges associated with the students' with SpLD literacy learning in primary schools have identified a strong need to undertake investigations to find out better ways for the organisation of resources in order to address this problem (Hussain, 2009). In addition, apart from these problems identified in the literature, my personal and professional experiences are also motivating factors for my study.

1.5 My journey to study dyslexia

My nephew is the key motivator for my investigation of dyslexia provision in KSA. Due to lack of support by the teachers, my nephew kept repeating classes at primary school, intermediate and secondary schools. The teachers would only allow him to move to the next class as a way of 'getting rid' of him from the school, which greatly had an effect on his self-esteem. This was made worse by his parents who could not understand why he was performing poorly in school as compared to his siblings; as a result, they would punish him for poor performance in school.

A study in KSA by Al-Ahmadi (2009), reports that due to lack of awareness of learning needs of children with SpLD, classroom teachers quite often have negative

attitudes toward them in class. Hence, my nephew who, at the age of twenty-one might have been at university, was still in secondary school, hence being the oldest student in the school. The study also indicates that universities in KSA also lack provision for students with SpLD because the current provisions are only drafted for primary schools and for some intermediate and secondary schools.

The experience I had with my nephew developed my interest in learning more about dyslexia. I realised that there is a strong need to identify the main issues regarding the lack of support for students with SpLD in KSA. Therefore, after completing my undergraduate degree in 2007, I started my career as a teaching assistant in the special educational needs department in one university in KSA. The following year, in 2008, I was awarded a KSA scholarship to study a Master's degree in special educational needs at the University of Exeter in England. During my masters study and placement in UK schools, I familiarised myself with the education system in England.

The present study, funded by KSA, studies the current policy and provision for SpLD in primary schools in one city in KSA and to gather views from different stakeholders. The aim is to bridge a research gap in KSA studies in this field. I have chosen Frith's framework as my theoretical framework to interpret the different views and beliefs of SpLD in KSA. Dyslexia in KSA is explored from three different perspectives (biological, cognitive and behavioural) as guided by Frith's framework for understanding dyslexia (Frith, 1995). I also used a constructivist approach with all my data to gain more understating about the educational provision for students with SpLD in primary schools in one city in KSA.

1.6 Aim of the study

The key aim of this research study is to evaluate and describe the policy and provision for learners with SpLD in the city of my study in KSA.

The objectives are to find out how SpLD is defined by parents and professionals in KSA. Also, it aims to investigate parents' and teachers' perceptions towards inclusion of children with dyslexia in primary schools in one city, in KSA. Moreover, my research objectives tend to investigate how the government's policy on inclusion of children with dyslexia is implemented in classrooms in primary schools in one city in KSA, and to investigate the collaboration between teachers, parents and the government in supporting children with dyslexia in primary schools in that city. Lastly it seeks to identify measures that can be taken to improve the support given to children with dyslexia in primary schools in KSA.

1.6.1 Research Questions

To achieve the research aims, one main research question has led me to pursue the investigation in the current study. The research question is:

1. Given the idiosyncratic definition and discussion of specific learning difficulties (SpLD) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, how are strategies for identification and provision framed in the context of actual classrooms?

As part of this, I intend to look at a range of issues concerning the difficulties children and teachers encounter in the classroom, teachers', advisers', parents' and childrens' with SpLD perspectives of inclusion as well as the kind of identification and support that is offered in two primary schools in one city in KSA.

The issues to be investigated are:

- Current provisions for children with SpLD in two primary schools in one city in KSA.
- Teachers' advisors' and parents' perspectives regarding SpLD from two primary schools in one city in KSA (Definitions and causes).
- Identification and assessment of students with SpLD in these two primary schools.
- Difficulties children with SpLD encounter in terms of teaching and inclusion.
- Difficulties teachers face in teaching children with SpLD.
- Teachers' advisers' and parents' perceptions about inclusion of children with SpLD in regular classrooms.

The research question and its issues are also informed by the literature reviewed on the importance of educational provision. According to MacKay (1997) and MacKay (2006), proper awareness of the educational provision can help in transforming the existing set of knowledge about a specific learning difficulty into a more enhanced set of knowledge.

1.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I present a case for the need to investigate students with SpLD in primary schools of KSA, drawing on relevant research literature. Despite the fact that Islam, the religion of KSA, encourages education and literacy and there are provisions for SpLD in KSA education, a range of issues still confront students,

teachers and other stakeholders in identifying, assessing and supporting students with SpLD. The chapter sets out some of the reasons for limited educational support for primary school students with SpLD in KSA. An important issue is a lack of awareness by the stakeholders regarding considering a shared framework that includes biological, cognitive and behavioural perspectives (Frith, 1995).

In the next chapter, I extensively discuss the theoretical framework of my study.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I examine the theory explored in this study to explain the concept under investigation. A theoretical framework was significant in linking the literature review to the methodology and in the interpretation of the research findings. The theoretical framework introduces and describes the philosophical viewpoint that explains why the research problem under investigation exists (Morse, 1994) cited in Martens (1998: 51).

Frith's theoretical approach to understanding dyslexia is extensively discussed in this chapter. Frith's model of dyslexia was deemed appropriate for this study due to her approach in understanding dyslexia which is quite similar to my research approach. By examining some of the dyslexia theoretical backgrounds, I was able to understand the nature of the difficulties faced by learners with dyslexia and how these influence approaches to teaching and learning.

2.2 Frith's framework for understanding dyslexia

There is a rich body of research on dyslexia dating more than one hundred years ago. The focus of my investigation covers a wide scope including the nature, causes, assessment, and various forms of support and provision based on different underpinning theories and philosophies. The most recent research acknowledges that both genetic and environmental influences are contributory factors in dyslexia. Likewise, further attention has been given to a better understanding of the interactions between the behavioural, social and emotional dimensions experienced

by learners with dyslexia and in so doing, using them to this group of learners' advantage. In the midst of all these research studies, the review also found that a universal consensus on the precise nature of dyslexia has still to be reached. On a positive note, there now exist a vast and still growing number of psychologists, academics and researchers who support the view that the development of phonological processing skills for learners with dyslexia plays a significant role in helping them learn to read.

There is no consensus among experts on the definition of dyslexia, nor is there agreement on its causes, hence there are many schools of thought, leading to different theories about dyslexia (Reid, 2009). For example, while some scholars view it as a developmental abnormality (Fawcett, 2001), to others, dyslexia is considered a neurological disorder with a genetic origin (Shaywitz, 1998; Frith et al., 2011). There are yet others who are sceptical whether dyslexia exists or is just a myth (Elliott and Grigorenko, 2014).

Since the definition of SpLD states that it is a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes, some professionals regard SpLD as a biologically based disorder that is associated with specific neurological dysfunctions (Shaywitz, 1998). While it is still unclear what precedes the neurological disorders that may lead to SpLD, heredity is considered to be a major factor, with SpLD occurring at higher rates within members of the same families (Frith et al., 2011). Nonetheless, Frith et al. (2011) argue that biological theory lacks rigorous empirical evidence since the existence of the "condition" is virtually unproven. After years of research, it has

still not been demonstrated that neurological dysfunctions exist in more than a minuscule number of children with SpLD (Coles, 1989).

To clearly explain the theories of developmental dyslexia, I critically examined a multi-level causal modelling framework which was introduced by Frith (1995). This led to a clear understanding of different aspects to dyslexia, hence helping to clarify issues related to the condition, including some which are far beyond the reading, writing and spelling problems, especially those with biological and behavioural signs. The framework accounts for diverse theories of developmental dyslexia and classifies them into three main categories or levels, namely biological, cognitive, and behavioural as shown in Figure 1 below.

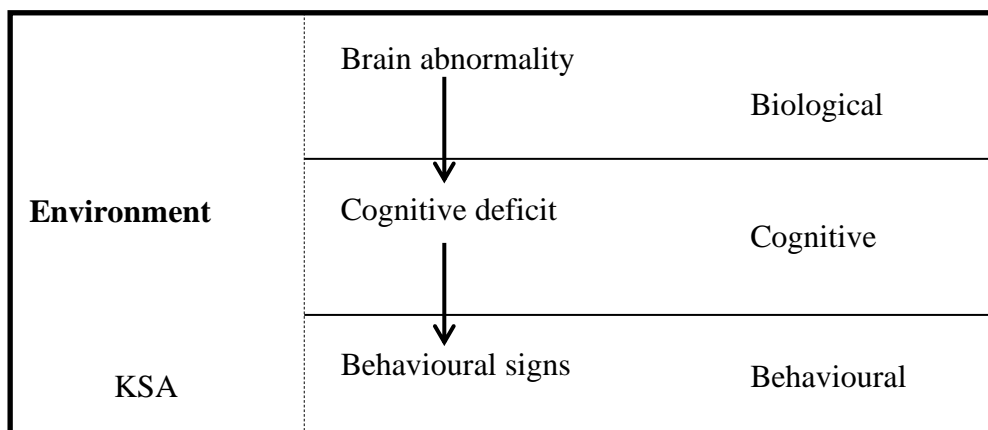


Figure 1: Frith's Framework of Understanding Dyslexia (Adopted from Frith, 1995)

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework adapted for this study, which according to Martens (1998) should provide a bearing on the planning and conducting of the literature review. Likewise, Maxwell (1996) in Robson, (2002: 63) describes conceptual frameworks as ‘the system of concepts, assumptions, expectations,

beliefs, and theories that supports and informs your research’. In the same vein, Miles and Huberman (1994) argue that ‘a conceptual framework explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied – the key factors, constructs, or variables – and the presumed relationships among them’ (p.18).

Singleton (2002) has shown that there is a relationship between certain cognitive abilities and dyslexia, for example in the cognitive neuropsychological perspective in which dyslexia is seen as a deficit in certain cognitive functions. Dyslexia is viewed as a form of learning difficulty resulting from a specific combination of cognitive limitations. It is not surprising then that the cognitive domain most researched in relation to dyslexia is that of phonological skills. Since cognitive abilities can be assessed in children before they begin to read and write, therefore it is possible to anticipate which children are likely to struggle in literacy.

Frith’s framework is looking into the different aspects of dyslexia and its relationship with the environment. The focus on the environmental factors supported me in exploring how SpLD is defined and identified in KSA and the support given to the students identified with SpLD. Second, the conceptual framework provides the structure for the study based on literature, personal experience and research findings. Third, despite the debates on the neurological basis of dyslexia, neither Frith’s model nor the present study focused on this.

Although, Frith’s framework does not fit completely with my study, it supported me in addressing some of the study’s aims as it helped me frame the distinct characteristics of the Arabic environment.

In her framework, Frith (1995) focuses mainly on students with dyslexia, however, in my study, I include different categories of participants, including students with dyslexia. The focal point of the study was the Arabic literacy lessons; nonetheless, the similarities of this research in relation to Frith's framework as well as other SpLD difficulties were included.

In the environmental elements I also included different aspects such as the use of technology and multimodality in classrooms. These aspects are now part of the environment, in which children are living and are working with the expectation to be able to use the smart devices and be able to text. Also there are a lot of computer programmes and software that help children with SpLD. Spell checker programmes help those children a lot, therefore the children do not have to wait for their teachers or parents to correct them (BDA, 2013).

Finally, Frith, in her framework for understanding dyslexia, discusses more about cognitive perspective and focused on phonological deficits. She focuses a lot on identification and assessment of students with SpLD, while I focus more on educational aspects (Frederickson and Cline, 2009). In order to take account of the relationship between cognitive theories and pedagogies, the difficulties that are usually faced by students with SpLD and teachers in the selected primary schools in this study are presented.

2.2.1 The Biological perspectives

Dyslexia is generally described as a disorder in learning to read, which scientists, educators, and parents have for years debated the causes. In this section I explore the first perspective of Frith's framework of understanding dyslexia; I critically

discuss the biological factors that lead to dyslexia and the influence of environmental factors. I therefore look at the biological explanation of dyslexia, including genetic and heredity factors and how these factors may or may not influence reading.

One of the basic assumptions in this study is that dyslexia and associated problems have a biological basis, and relate primarily to constitutional features of the brain. According to Frith (1995) biological factors may explain dyslexia, including: genetic, neurobiological, and hormonal factors. The genetic and neurobiological influences are considered as the most influential causes of dyslexia in current scientific research. For example the International Dyslexia Association (formerly the Orton Dyslexia Society) provides the following definition of dyslexia:

Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge. (International Dyslexia Association, 2002).

Although Frith is strongly inclined towards the biological explanation of dyslexia, she at the same acknowledges that interactions between biology and environment cannot be ignored (Frith, 1995; Frith, 2002). According to Frith (1995), as a developmental disorder dyslexia can be explained by linking evidence from the three levels shown in figure 1: Frith argues that dyslexia has a biological origin leading to a cognitive deficit hence resulting in particular pattern of behavioural signs as expressed in Figure 1 (Frith, 1995).

Family studies have shown that there is more risk of having a child with dyslexia if you are born into a family with a history of this problem in the general population (Firth et al., 2013). In a major longitudinal study, Frith et al. (2011) followed children with dyslexia from 2.5 years to 8 years and found that 65% were assessed with dyslexia at the endpoint. Proponents of biological theory like Gilger et al. (1991) cited in Reid (2009) relied on data derived from genetic studies to estimate that the risk of a son having dyslexia if he has a father with dyslexia are about 40%. Gilger (2008) cited in Reid (2009) states that although there is a need to be wary of studies that make sweeping generalisations about the impact of genes on learning and literacy, there is strong evidence that genes do have an impact on dyslexia, and that there will be children who are genetically at risk of dyslexia. Study of twins has over the years provided valuable insight into the contribution of genetic and environmental factors to dyslexia. For example Hensler et al. (2010) in their study, which involved 1,024 first grade twins, observed high heritabilities for reading ability and dyslexia indicating significant genetic influences.

Further studies have also been conducted on consanguineous marriages to determine their effect on dyslexia. For example, a study of the effect of consanguineous marriage on reading disability in the Arab community by Abu-Rabia and Maroun (2005) involved children of first-cousin marriages, second-cousin marriages, distantly related parents and children of unrelated parents. The results of their study indicated that the rate of reading disabilities among children of first-cousin parents was higher than that of children of second-cousin parents, distantly related parents, or unrelated parents. Although in Frith's causal model this did not feature, it was one of the themes which emerged from the participants

during data collection. Some participants attributed the causes of learning disabilities to consanguinity.

Although genetic factors are considered some of the dimensions of dyslexia, nonetheless, the occurrence of dyslexia in a family is not sufficient to support the genetic explanation of the problem since elements such as the environment are part of the shared components of child development. Hence, even in the case of monozygotic twins, the effect of environment cannot be entirely ruled out. To conclude this section I will refer back to Frith's framework (see Figure 1) in which she indicated that the environment can be heavily involved in each perspective.

2.2.2 Cognitive perspectives

This section highlights major issues pertaining to the cognitive perspective of understanding dyslexia. I concentrate on issues such as phonological deficit, visual and auditory deficit, automaticity, working memory, phonological awareness, and orthographic skills.

Over the last three decades, the phonological deficit hypothesis has remained dominant in providing a cognitive explanation for dyslexia (Snowling, 1998). Frith (2011) argues that healthcare professionals must be aware of the cognitive perspectives of dyslexia in order to apply significant measures. According to Morgan and Klein (2000: 18), "An understanding of the SpLD cognitive style may overcome the mismatch between how people with dyslexia learn, remember, and process information and the ideas, expectations, and assumptions of their teachers, colleagues, employers, friends, and spouses who have no dyslexia."

The rationale for reviewing the cognitive theory was to link the data collected during this study to existing knowledge of the subject under investigation. Just as I stated earlier, a review of existing literature was beneficial in developing themes for the study and for broadening my understanding of dyslexia as well. Since one of my research aims was to investigate teachers' and parents' perspectives of SpLD in primary schools in one city in KSA, it was prudent that I consider the cognitive aspect of dyslexia in examining the Saudi context of how children with dyslexia are viewed in order to develop a strong argument from the data. Just as stated by Frith, (See figure 1) the environment interacts with all three perspectives to influence the extent to which children with dyslexia are influenced by the 'disorder'.

There are a number of theories regarding the cognitive nature of developmental dyslexia. The most common theory suggests that individuals with dyslexia have a phonological deficit. Frith (1995) describes phonology as a concept that belongs to the cognitive level of description. According to Snowling (2000), individuals with dyslexia seem to be slow in developing phonemic analysis skills; therefore they tend to underperform in tasks involving phonological awareness, such as phonemic segmentation, short-term memory, rapid naming, and the manipulation of speech sounds.

Another perspective of the phonological theory of developmental dyslexia focuses on orthography in phonological mappings of reading acquisition (Tops et al., 2012). A study by Swanson, Zheng and Jerman (2009) comparing children with and without reading disabilities with measures of short-term memory and working memory concluded that deficits related to the phonological loop contribute to

observed reading and spelling difficulties in children with literacy impairments. A number of studies on neuro-imaging data, the functions of the brain, and its anatomical structure support the phonological deficit hypothesis, while others have highlighted phonological processing as a key to reading development. Nation et al. (2004) argue that most current theories of reading development stress the fundamental importance of phonological skills in learning to read.

Theorists such as Snowling (2000) recognize phonological deficit as a possible indicator of dyslexia; but are not of the view that there is any causal role in the reading disorder. Despite the fact that the phonological deficit hypothesis has been widely accepted amongst researchers as the main cognitive deficit in dyslexia, there are those of the opinion, for example Undheim and Sund (2008), that phonological deficit theory cannot fully explain or account for the causes of dyslexia: other causes such as visual processing might have a great impact on reading acquisition. Nonetheless, according to Undheim et al. (2011) there is a consensus amongst researchers that not all poor readers have deficits in phonological processing.

The limitation of the phonological deficit theory is that it does not account for difficulties in ‘broader areas of functioning’. According to Nicolson and Fawcett (1995), it is evident that children with dyslexia face difficulties with some skills that are not related to phonological processing, such as “forgetfulness, distractibility and clumsiness” (p.20). Additionally, the phonological deficit hypothesis becomes less significant in relation to other factors such as “communication skills, processing speed and self-esteem” in cases of adult dyslexics; there is a significant amount of data of dyslexia cases which are not phonological. Several researchers

such as McArthur and Bishop (2001), Mody (2003) and Rosen (2003) have argued that deficits observed in processing phonological awareness may be due to lower-level auditory deficits resulting from perception of brief or rapid speech and non-speech sounds, or due to visual difficulties and visual attention problems in the perception of motion or even a combination of multimodal “auditory and visual” deficits in processing dynamic and transient stimuli. According to Farmer and Klein (1995), any damage in early auditory pathways affects the quality of phonemic representation, causing disturbances in typical reading development due to the lack of interaction between auditory temporal processing, speech perception/production and reading acquisition.

Proponents of the phonological disorder hypothesis as a core factor in reading deficits, such as Ramus and Szenkovits (2008), argue that the phonological deficit affects three main cognitive abilities; phonological awareness, phonological short-term memory, and slow lexical retrieval ability. Tamboer and Vorst (2015) describe phonemic awareness as a meta-linguistic skill, which involves efficient understanding of the relationship between alphabetical letters and their corresponding phonemes. Throughout phonological processing, children link the speech they hear (phonetic input) with the utterance they produce (phonetic output). Individuals with adequate phonological awareness skills have the ability to break down sentences into words, manipulate these parts into rhymes, substitute one sound for another, blend sounds together, recognize words as a sequence of phonemes (i.e. /r/a/t) and delete sounds (i.e. “blend” without the /b/).

Bradley and Bryant (1983) have investigated the comparative effectiveness of training in rhyming and alliteration skills (sound categorization) as compared to training in semantic categorization. In their study, the group of pre-readers who were trained in sound categorization showed more significant progress in reading but equivalent progress in mathematics, providing evidence for a causal link between phonological awareness skills and reading acquisition. Bradley and Bryant (1983) as well as Bradley (1983) confirmed their findings through a series of studies of both normal readers and of children with dyslexia by relating the ability to rhyme to the knowledge of nursery rhymes. The phonological deficit hypothesis claims that individuals with dyslexia have a difficulty specifically in the representation, storage and retrieval of speech sound (Callens et al., 2012).

Studies reviewed by Ramus and Szenkovist (2008) identified impairments that are specific to the segmental phonology; these are the phonemes, which are distinctive in a language. Phonology also extends to the prosody of a language, which comprises intonation, pausing patterns, and rhymes. Prosodic awareness is developed prior to the development of phonemic awareness; young infants are sensitive to prosody and they incorporate it in their cry patterns. Prosody plays a key role in language awareness in infants; as pitch variation and pausing facilitate the phrase boundaries' identification, rhyme helps with identification of syllables, and "envelope rise time" frequency of the intensity change from vowel onset to intensity maximum. Hence, impaired ability to recognize acoustic features of the prosodic phonology of a language is associated with difficulties in segmental phonology. The phonological deficit hypothesis provides a causal explanation for dyslexia, describing the reading difficulties of people with dyslexia as an inability

to store and retrieve the grapheme/phoneme correspondence of the letters with the constituent sounds of speech (Doyle, 2002; Shaywitz and Shaywitz, 2005). This difficulty hinders the basis of reading with an alphabetical system, which in turn obstructs progress in learning to read. Phonological awareness is a fundamental prerequisite for reading acquisition (Peterson and Pennington, 2012). Tops et al. (2012) have highlighted that in cases of mild hearing loss, where the formation of phonological representation, speech perception and production is disturbed, reading acquisition could still take place, while in cases where mild phonological deficit is present and speech perception and production are intact, learning to read can be a huge challenge. This implies that phonological development is disrupted in individuals with dyslexia, which in turn lead to poor language acquisition.

Most people with dyslexia learn better if the knowledge is presented in a larger context, for example, they would have a difficult time remembering three steps in a procedure if they did not know how those steps fit into the rest of the procedure (Mortimore, 2008; Bell, 2013). Many people with dyslexia also tend to be very visual thinkers (Morgan and Klein, 2000). Also people with dyslexia usually think of problems in very holistic terms, often seeing the “big picture” before seeing any small details (Morgan and Klein, 2000; Mortimore, 2008). Additionally, people with dyslexia tend to be very good at visualizing multiple dimensions of drawings, often being able to extrapolate the third dimension from two dimensional drawings and plans (Gotshall and Stefanou, 2011). They tend to learn very well from visual aids such as diagrams and transparencies (Morgan and Klein, 2000; Powell, et al., 2004). Tactile-kinesthetic methods of learning can also be very beneficial as many

people with dyslexia are very good at learning through a “hands on” approach (Mortimore, 2008; Gotshall and Stefanou, 2011).

Paulesu et al. (1996) reported around 10% of the population in English-speaking countries has great difficulty learning to read in spite of adequate educational resources, normal cognitive development, and no obvious sensory or oral language defects. Researchers and educators generally agree that difficulties with phonological processing, short-term memory, rapid automatic naming skills, and orthographic processing are the root causes of early reading problems. Pennington, van der Lely and Marshall (2010) have argued that the root deficit in reading disability is a subtle language processing problem that gives rise to difficulty with analysis, synthesis, memory, and/or rapid recall of the sounds of the language. Children who are most at risk of developing reading difficulties lack skills in: 1) phonological awareness, including phoneme analysis, segmentation, and blending in spoken words; 2) the ability to say rapidly the names of known objects, colours, letters, or numbers; and 3) short-term auditory/verbal memory.

Phonological awareness is a precursor to understanding the alphabetical principle that phonemes correspond to alphabetical letters in a spelling unit. Rapid naming is related to the ability to associate names automatically with orthographic symbols, a skill that is needed to acquire automatic word recognition. Some of the studies have found that the naming system offers powerful early differential prediction of reading problems, and that speed and accuracy of word-finding differentiate average from readers with dyslexia at all ages (Wolf and Segal, 1999; van der Lely and Marshall, 2010; Peterson and Pennington, 2012). Some of the investigators

have also reported that low scores on memory-span tasks in persons with reading disabilities seem to be a marker for poor response to remediation. Torgesen (2005) reported that people with reading disabilities tend to do worse consistently on memory-span tests than on any other single type of task commonly found in intelligence tests.

Waring et al. (1996) have found that the working memory task that requires the student to repeat digits presented aloud in reverse order was important in distinguishing between poor readers who recovered by sixth grade and those who did not. Phonological awareness, rapid naming, and phonological memory deficits as markers for dyslexia come from the theoretical perspective that reading disabilities are the result of problems with a core phonological processing deficit. Other research studies have made certain contributions of orthographic skills to reading and reading disabilities. Growth in reading was predicted by Verbal IQ, orthographic, phonological, and RAN skills. Berninger et al. (2001) have found an orthographic factor, based on short-term coding and long-term memory for orthographic word forms was one of the strongest predictors of reading and writing disability in children and adults. Gotshall and Stefanou (2011) have supported the idea of more cognitive trait deficiencies that the learner is experiencing. There is a general agreement in research that every student having reading, writing, and memory related problems must be explicitly taught sound-symbol correspondences to acquire phonological decoding skills. The methodical teaching of phonological analysis and synthesis skills is necessary to remediate dyslexia (Gotshall and Stefanou, 2011).

Initial problems with learning sound-symbol correspondence commonly give rise to spelling problems, with resulting writing failure and avoidance of writing activities (Frith, 1980). Large numbers of middle school students report writing difficulty, and writing as the most common problem of high school students with learning disabilities (Gotshall and Stefanou, 2011). As is the case with reading, disabilities in writing often involve the short-circuiting of foundational skills. Without the necessary foundational skills, fluency in composition is elusive. Writing problems typically range from lower order technical problems, such as difficulty with handwriting and handling of pen, to higher order cognitive and meta-cognitive/executive functioning problems involving planning, goal-setting, clarity, organization, and genre concerns.

Students with writing difficulties often show fine motor, orthographic, and/or orthographic-motor integration problems (Gotshall and Stefanou, 2011). These difficulties affect their handwriting fluency, and poor handwriting skills, along with poor spelling, impair compositional fluency. Thus, it takes these children longer both to generate ideas for writing and to physically write text. Gotshall and Stefanou (2011) argued that poor handwriting is generally not primarily the result of poor motor skills, but of poor letter representation in memory. The compromised letter knowledge of children with poor handwriting, contributes to their difficulty in producing written text fluently. The quality of phonological and orthographic representations of letters in memory may influence the spelling and learning processes.

Berninger et al. (1997) in a surprising finding, reported that their sample of children receiving training in handwriting fluency and composition improved in word recognition in reading, a skill that was not directly taught. It would appear, then, that handwriting may be a tool for developing orthographic awareness, which, along with phonological awareness, is essential for decoding. Explicit instruction in handwriting may transfer to both word recognition in reading and to text generation in written composition. These authors suggest that, since writing is a multi-component process, training in one process may have had unanticipated beneficial effects on other literacy processes. As children develop, they need to use higher-level cognitive skills of memory and executive function for writing. For intermediate grade children, the verbal working memory system, that function by which we hold ideas in mind long enough to use them, becomes more important.

Spelling becomes more apparent after third grade because there are more unknown and low frequency words that students cannot simply memorize. Students do not have visual cues, and they usually start to randomly guess at unknown words, typically using just the first consonant (Bell, 2013). Hudson et al. (2007) described the two most obvious difficulties displayed by children with dyslexia when asked to read grade-level text. First, they accurately read fewer words in a passage by sight than average readers. They frequently guess at or attempt to sound out many of the words, displaying difficulty with fluent word recognition. The second difficulty is regarding decoding, which has resulted in many errors when reading words they do not know (Bell, 2013). This difficulty is related to the previously described weakness in connecting letters and sounds when decoding words. Both of these

weaknesses lead to difficulty with comprehending what they read because of the extreme effort and time involved in reading printed words.

In addition to problems with phonological functioning and literacy, many people with dyslexia have problems with issues such as motor coordination and balancing. The cerebellum could be the prime candidate for the cause of difficulties experienced by people with dyslexia, as argued by Nicolson and Fawcett (1990). Assessing a range of skills in cognitive study, severe deficits were detected in motor skills, balance, phonological skills and rapid processing, a similar pattern to the automatization deficit hypothesis of people with dyslexia (Nicolson and Fawcett, 1995).

Difficulties experienced by individuals with dyslexia may be due to cerebellar deficits, as this is the major brain structure which is responsible for sensory information integration, prediction of muscular outcomes and automatization. From a biological perspective, people with dyslexia have a mildly dysfunctional cerebellum, which results in a number of cognitive difficulties (Gotshall and Stefanou, 2011). For example: (i) the cerebellum plays a vital role in motor coordination which results in impaired or dysfunctional speech articulation, in turn leading to deficiencies in phonological representation; and (ii) the cerebellum is responsible for the automatization of learned tasks such as reading, driving and typing.

A weak ability to automatize would affect the ability to learn phoneme-grapheme correspondences, and in particular may lead to apraxia of speech, which prevents the smooth and efficient translation of phonology into verbal-motor commands.

Finally, (iii) the cerebellum is a support structure for cognitive processes of all types, and therefore its impairment affects the co-ordination of sensory data acquired by the brain (Gotshall and Stefanou, 2011). A study carried out by Fawcett et al. (1996) to explore the correlation between incidents of dyslexia and cerebellar functions (posture, muscle tone, hypotonia of the upper limbs and complex voluntary movement) reported that the performance of individuals with dyslexia was worse than that of the control group in eleven out of fourteen tasks. They concluded that individuals with dyslexia are deficient in cerebellar-based tasks.

Bosse et al. (2007) found that the attention span of children with dyslexia is usually very low, they get distracted quite easily and they are generally inattentive in class hence failing to follow instructions leading to poor performance in school. Teachers are required to seek specialist support when they notice such children in their classes. According to Gotshall and Stefanou, (2011) the support of a specialist teacher would be necessary to ensure that these children achieve their potential.

In summary, children with dyslexia have deficiencies in a core group of phonological skills involving phonological awareness, rapid serial naming, short-term memory, and orthographic skills. Letter identification and sound symbol correspondence difficulties lead to later-emerging problems with spelling, handwriting, and written language composition. Children, having reading problems, should be taught explicit sound/symbol connections, while children with writing problems need explicit instruction in mechanical writing skills of letter formation and spelling (Gotshall and Stefanou, 2011). Students with dyslexia do not generally become proficient in these areas without specific instruction. Lack of automaticity

in skills like letter recognition, spelling, and handwriting interferes with emergence of later meta-cognitive skills like reading comprehension and writing composition.

2.2.3 Behavioural perspectives

This section is aimed at developing an understanding of the behavioural perspective of dyslexia by critically discussing behavioural difficulties associated with dyslexia. Students with dyslexia usually have low self-esteem, hence they hardly participate in class for fear of getting embarrassed. They often underestimate personal skills and knowledge and tend to believe that because they have difficulties in reading, spelling and writing, they cannot perform as good as their peers. In this section I discuss some of the behavioural and emotional factors characterised in students with dyslexia, such as lack of self-confidence, low self-esteem, truancy and laziness.

Years of continuous failure in school have a detrimental effect on students. Most students experiencing learning difficulties usually have low self-esteem and lack confidence. Students with dyslexia experience serious emotional outcomes due to the inability to develop effective skills and strategies in literacy. Emotional damage is worsened when parents and teachers fail to understand the student's difficulties and misinterpret it as laziness, immaturity or defiance, hence failing to manage the learning difficulty appropriately (Riddick, 1996; Riddick et al., 1999). Just as I stated in the case of my nephew, many children experiencing difficulties in learning are often subjected to verbal and physical abuse from their peers, from parents and from their teachers (UNICEF, 2005; Saylor and Leach, 2009; The International NGO Advisory Council, 2011). This causes them to become defensive and often

they try avoiding school including truancy and eventually quitting school (Frith, 2011). Schools and parents have an important role to play in preventing behavioural difficulties that may develop as a reaction to learning difficulties.

Firth et al. (2013) reported that most pre-schoolers with dyslexia were happy and well adjusted. Their emotional and behavioural problems began when there was a measurable discrepancy between cognitive ability and academic performance. The frustration in children with dyslexia often comes from their inability to meet expectations or from being misunderstood by others. As they progress in school years, the frustration increases as their classmates outshine them in literacy skills. Due to the learning difficulty associated with dyslexia they most often make many 'careless' or 'stupid' mistakes, which is extremely frustrating to them as it makes them feel incompetent and inadequate due to their inability to meet expectations. Most parents and teachers perceive a bright child who is not doing enough to learn to read and write. Unlike physical disabilities, dyslexia is physically invisible. Firth et al. (2013) described how children with dyslexia find it difficult to cope in class when they begin to read. They find it hard to perceive and understand a set of codes that their schoolmates operate easily with.

Children with dyslexia are struggling with the sequence of the order of the letters of the alphabet (Mortimore, 2008), they poorly understand and remember the text they read and hear. In addition they have difficulties in distinguishing between left and right, smooth swapping in the correct order, for example, of month names, days of the week, and numbers (Elbeheri et al., 2006; Mortimore, 2008). Dyslexia is a very critical concern for the parents and teachers who in most cases perceive the child as

not working hard enough in their studies. Teachers and parents may view their otherwise intelligent student as not putting in enough effort (Elbeheri et al., 2006). Such students are often advised to try harder, to read more, and to spend more time reading. They are quite often given extra homework with a hope that this will help them improve their performance. For many students with dyslexia, the extra workload they are burdened with, including just being told to try harder, is sometimes three times more than that of their peers without dyslexia (Frith, 1995). Many of these children often struggle with school work which can sometimes be detrimental to their emotional health.

Studies revealed that children with dyslexia, when compared with their peers without dyslexia tend to show higher levels of depression, loneliness, and low self-esteem (Riddick et al., 1999; Mortimore, 2008). Aggression has also been identified as one of the major behavioural problems, which is directly associated with dyslexia (Riddick, 1996; Eade, 1999). According to Frith (1995), students with dyslexia expressed more loneliness and felt less integrated in school; they were victimized more often than other students. These findings suggested that the emotional effects resulting from dyslexia make life in school difficult for these children. They have a higher risk of being bullied and teased, and usually cannot get along with their peer group. Additionally, Frith (2002) noted that children with dyslexia have a higher level of anxiety than children without dyslexia and tend to be more anxious when faced with something which seemingly appears beyond their control. These children become fearful and anxious because of constant failure and frustration in school.

Several studies suggest that dyslexia is associated with behavioural problems. Frith (2002) reported that boys with dyslexia showed significantly lower levels of social competence in terms of participation in activities in school, and more behavioural problems related to immaturity, hostile-withdrawal, aggressiveness and hyperactivity, when compared to normative samples of boys in the same age range. Frith (2002) found that adolescents with dyslexia tend to be generally less self-satisfied, more delinquent and less flexible compared to the normal control group.

One of the primary effects of dyslexia is in reading abilities that are considerably lower than in students who do not have dyslexia. Academically, this initial struggle with reading could encourage avoidance of reading, which, in turn, could negate potential reading growth. These reading issues extend into other subject areas and cause lowered performance in many academic subject areas such as science, learning foreign languages, and mathematics as well (Frith, 1995). The perceived low academic success can lead to feelings of inferiority, which can lead to issues with self-esteem.

In a qualitative study by Glazzard (2010), semi-structured interviews were conducted with nine pupils whose age ranged from 14–15 years. Although the sample size was small, and the study lacked quantitative data resulting in complexity with statistical significance, the study suggested that self-esteem was influenced by feelings of inferiority due to academic underachievement for children with dyslexia.

Despite the somewhat conflicting views about the effect of dyslexia on self-esteem, an individual's sense of self-worth can be influenced by what is perceived to hold

value within the culture they are a part of. Because a significant portion of the day for most school-aged children involves school, where by default, value is typically placed on academic gains, a student with dyslexia, or any academic deficit, is more likely to experience low self-esteem.

According to Riddick (1996) children with dyslexia usually get upset and irritated due to the difficulties they experience in learning to read. Signs of depression and low sense of worth are evident in such children during classroom participation, which can be attributed due to the lack of strong bases of language development. Different problems related to behaviours are normally noted at school as well as at home. The child may become unenthusiastic toward their studies in general. The success of children in the school may largely be influenced if the problem is not detected and intervention measured put in place on time (Burden, 2005).

Snowling (2012) has discussed that children with dyslexia can be helped to overcome their difficulties if the problem is identified early. It is important therefore that teachers get appropriate training so that they are able to identify and support children with dyslexia in their classrooms.

2.3 Environmental explanations of dyslexia

In this section I discuss the environmental factors which influence the three levels in Frith's framework of understanding dyslexia. The family background, social influence and school environment are discussed in details. Nonetheless, Spear-Swerling and Sternberg (1998) argue that although environmental factors may not explain the causes of dyslexia, there is some evidence that they can significantly affect the nature and extent of the difficulties experienced by people with dyslexia.

For example, Snow et al. (1991) argue that children brought up in a ‘literate home environment’ where they are often exposed to reading and learning materials, they are more likely to progress in literacy than their peers who are exposed to less ‘literate’ context.

Although dyslexia develops from neurologically based dysfunctions, it depends on the environmental factors to determine to what extent and in which areas this deviation will appear as a disorder. External circumstances, for example environmental or societal deprivations will determine whether it will be a disability or a condition which can be managed. The basis of this environmental theory is that children function poorly due to injustices in the school system and in society, not due to deficits within the individual. Coles (1989) stated that the identification of SpLD, in a biological sense, might disregard the contribution of the schools, families, or other social influences might have had toward the development of SpLD.

For example a school psychologist subscribing to the environmental theory may be more apt to use The Responsiveness to Intervention (RtI) as their primary assessment tool because RtI focuses on the instructional environment of the child and considers how the child responds to evidence-based instruction compared to other students receiving similar instruction (Fuchs and Fuchs, 1998; Reynolds and Shaywitz, 2009). Still other professionals believe there is an interaction between biology and environment, called the “interactivity hypothesis” (Coles, 1989). The “interactivity hypothesis” postulates the academic failure experienced by students with SpLD results from an interaction between the ways they process information

and the information processing demands of the instructional methods used in their classrooms (Conner, 1983).

The interaction theory states that the reading process consists of an interaction between the readers, the different kinds of information in the material, and the general context in which the material is read (Rumelhart, 1994). With both of these interaction theories, there is equal responsibility extended toward the child's neurological capabilities and the child's environment. School psychologists who value both biological and environmental factors may choose to employ discrepancy and RtI methods as tools for the identification of SpLDs.

Referring to interaction hypothesis which states that the development of language proficiency is promoted by face-to-face interaction and communication, Conner (1983) and Coles (1989) argue the academic failure experienced by students with SpLD results from an interaction between the way they process information and the instructional methods used in their classrooms. The theory further states that reading process consists of an interaction between the readers, the different kinds of information in the material, and the general context in which the material is read (Rumelhart, 1994); hence, the theory is a good example of how environmental factors influence other perspectives for understanding dyslexia, for example, the biological, the cognitive and the behavioural.

The family is basically a child's primary educational environment which essentially provides certain conditions, which may consequently affect their performance at school. Halawah (2006) argues that students whose families support them with academic work and functionally interact with them; and where there are few arguments and low levels of stress, they are more likely to do better at school and

learn more easily. However, in troubled families where children receive less stimulation and of lower quality, their academic development is seemingly slower (Sheppard, 2005; Ghazarian and Buehler, 2010).

The effects of these factors could even be more pronounced in children with SpLD as opposed to their peers without SpLD (Dyson, 2010). There is some evidence that children with SpLD from families who provide little academic support and who are unstable tend to experience more challenges in education than their peers from supportive families (O'Connor, McConkey, and Hartop, 2005; Trainor, 2005; Strnadova, 2006). However, there are inconclusive findings regarding the effects of family environment for children with SpLD and those without SpLD in their academic performance (Dyson, 2010).

Another important aspect for students' academic success is the cooperation between their families and schools (Powell et al., 2010). In this regard, there is evidence that parental involvement in their children's education stimulates their motivation to achieve academic success, their commitment to school and their perception of competence, emotional control and efficiency (Gonzalez, Willems, and Doan, 2005; Urdan, Solek, and Schoenfelder, 2007). Thus, parental involvement promotes children's academic development in general and is therefore of special interest for children with SpLD. The family-school collaboration approach provides an opportunity for shared responsibility for educating and socializing children and for providing pupils with consistent support for their academic success. Emphasis on collaboration should be on finding and building ways for families and teachers to

work together to promote educational experiences and academic success (Virginia Department of Education, 2002).

School environment is another significant factor which has influence on children's learning. Students spend a large part of their early years of life in classrooms where they gain an understanding of their place in the world and where they nurture their potential for contribution to the society (Grubaugh and Houston, 1990). Students' classroom experiences are known to determine their general overall performance in school (Grubaugh and Houston, 1990; Cornelius and Herrenkohl, 2004). With the classroom environment being such a significant place for intellectual development, it is important that every precaution is taken to make sure that schools are managed in a manner that promotes self-esteem, creativity and positive learning. Classroom conditions can adversely or positively affect student's performance, especially those with SpLD; these may include sitting arrangement, stimulation level, motivation and availability of teaching and learning resources. Other factors include the support given to children during lessons.

Teachers who have no knowledge of dyslexia are more likely to attribute consistent underachievement by children with SpLD to laziness or carelessness or just not motivated to put extra effort (Conner, 1983). In such situations, these children can be made to feel different from their peers simply because they may be unable to follow simple instructions, which for others seem easy. Teachers have a responsibility to provide conducive learning atmosphere for all students within their classes. Teachers need to have an understanding of the challenges faced by children with dyslexia in class; with this knowledge, a great deal of learning hindrances

faced by the children in class would be prevented (Conner, 1983). There is evidence that in a positive and encouraging learning environment, children with dyslexia are more likely to reach their full potential and to develop a sense of self-worth (Grubaugh and Houston, 1990; Cornelius and Herrenkohl, 2004).

There are other intangible elements such as the lighting or the temperature of the room, classroom rules, or the noise level in class. Each of these can have an impact on the student's focus and achievement in class. For example, in a class where children are actively engaged and the learning environment is lively; children are more likely to perform better. Teachers' motivation is another factor; if for instance, the teacher is unmotivated or lacks enthusiasm in their work, this is likely to have a negative impact on the students' performance in class (Grubaugh and Houston, 1990; Cornelius and Herrenkohl, 2004).

Sometimes classroom rules can affect the way pupils perform in class. As much as possible, students should be involved in setting classroom rules so that they can own them and not feel oppressed or under any form of coercion. It is essential that teachers create a learning environment where students feel free to share their views without fear of being reprimanded or criticised. In order to do this, teachers must make sure that students are aware of the consequences of inappropriate behaviour. Teacher's style of classroom management and control can yield positive or negative consequences for their students (Grubaugh and Houston, 1990; Cornelius and Herrenkohl, 2004).

The noise level in class, including background noise is also another factor known to affect pupils' performance in the classroom. Pupils with SpLD are easily distracted

by noise during lessons hence the need for teachers to provide quiet environment for them. Teachers need to be aware of the causes and effects of all these elements in order to create a conducive learning environment for learners with SpLD (Grubaugh and Houston, 1990; Cornelius and Herrenkohl, 2004).

It is important that students are made aware of what is expected of them at any particular time in school since pupils with SpLD find inconsistent classroom regulations very confusing. The classroom environment plays a crucial role in keeping students engaged and allowing them to succeed in learning. Teachers can modify the learning environment to achieve these results; for example, teachers can vary teaching styles to break monotony and to make learning lively; they can also use a variety of teaching resources to enhance teaching and learning by incorporating a multisensory approach to learning (Grubaugh and Houston, 1990; Cornelius and Herrenkohl, 2004).

2.4 Misconceptions about dyslexia

In this section I critically discuss some of the common misconceptions and myths about dyslexia. Misconceptions such as, dyslexia is a disease and can be cured; that dyslexia exists in males more than female, and that dyslexia is characterized by letter or word reversals are discussed in this section.

Sometimes dyslexia is viewed as a medical condition from some quarters, for example during data collection there were quite a number of respondents who believed that the condition was medical and should therefore be dealt with by medical practitioners. Nonetheless, there is a general consensus that dyslexia is not a disease to be 'treated' but rather a difficulty that a child is born with and often

runs in families. Early recognition and appropriate intervention can ameliorate the effect of dyslexia. People with dyslexia can learn to accommodate to a greater or lesser degree depending on their own personality and the type of support they have received from both home and school.

In an attempt to understand the causes of dyslexia, some studies have looked beyond the genetic factors as the causes of dyslexia and looked at factors such as hypoglycaemia or low blood sugar level, hyperthyroidism, omega-3 and fatty acid dietary supplementation even allergies, as possible causes of dyslexia (Richardson et al., 2012). However these studies are criticized as some researchers have found them unpersuasive (Everatt and Reid, 2009). Referring back to Frith's framework (see Figure 1) the environment is notably involved in each of the three perspectives. An example of a biological environmental influence is the biochemical approach to dyslexia (Baker, 1985). In these cases a deficiency in certain fatty acids is considered an important factor, but also where vitamins and minerals are also lacking in the body (Cyhlarova et al., 2007). The idea of a biochemical approach or of biological environmental influences has apparently been criticized for its poor research design, its use of correlation data and the lack of clear focus on the development of reading skills (Elliott and Grigorenko, 2014). In addition the idea has been rejected by some specialists who argue that nutrition has nothing to do with dyslexia (Baker, 1985).

In a bit to examine teachers' perceptions of dyslexia, Wadlington and Wadlington (2005) compared the understanding of dyslexia among different categories of educators. They surveyed 250 faculty members and students in the college of

education at a southern regional university in the USA. The participants included school administrators, counsellors, university faculty teachers, elementary general teachers, secondary general teachers, speech therapists and special education teachers.

A 30-item survey called the Dyslexia Belief Index (DBI) developed by the two researchers was used as the major research tool. Wadlington and Wadlington (2005) found that overall, all types of educators in this study had a poor understanding of dyslexia. Wadlington and Wadlington (2005) maintain that with better understanding regarding dyslexia, elementary general education teachers are able to recognize subtle problems related to dyslexia at the early stage of learning. They concluded that more information and hands-on experiences including theoretical and practical training about dyslexia should be provided for educators.

Perez and Gaffney (1994) also conducted a one-day symposium to examine definitions of dyslexia given by education profession, including parents and administrators, to see if there were any similarities or differences. Their responses were then categorized into 17 characteristics of dyslexia for comparison and analysis. In the pre-symposium survey, the researchers found that the educators mostly recognized dyslexia “as a reading difficulty” rather than “as a language problem” by highlighting one of the four language skills. The researchers found that the parents had greater insight into dyslexia than the educators by mentioning language-related issues more frequently.

The widely accepted phonological model provides evidence to refute some of the common misconceptions about dyslexia. One common misperception about dyslexia is the idea that it is characterized by letter or word reversals (Wadlington and Wadlington, 2005). While these reversals may certainly be an indication of possible existence of dyslexia, however, they cannot be solely regarded to be a result of dyslexia since many young students who are just learning to read and write may display letter or word reversals. These reversals, at an early age are more of an indication of the developmental level as opposed to an indication of possible dyslexia (Firth et al., 2013). Most children with developmental reversals do not retain them for long. Children with dyslexia, however, are more likely to have an inclination towards retaining these reversals. Another frequently held error is that dyslexia results from below average intelligence. According to Firth et al. (2013) this is inherently untrue because difficulties with spelling and reading would obviously be expected in a student with low intelligence. Students with dyslexia are cognitively capable of learning to spell and read; yet they struggle.

Another misconception about dyslexia is based on gender; for many years there has been an assumption that there are many more males with dyslexia than females (Critchley 1970; Goldberg and Schiffman 1972; Hier 1979; Finucci and Childs 1981). However, this imbalance has been called into question (Shaywitz et al., 1990; Wadsworth et al. 1992; Lubs et al. 1993). Girls and boys, however, are almost equally influenced by dyslexia. This perception is based on externalizing behaviour, which boys seem to engage in more frequently than girls do. These externalizing behaviors can be viewed as aggressive and disruptive. These kinds of externalizing behaviours can disrupt classroom learning. Because boys seem to

engage in these behaviours more frequently than do girls, boys tend to get picked on. Another common perception about dyslexia is that dyslexia is caused by laziness or lack of effort. Teachers and parents may view their otherwise intelligent students and conclude that their lack of success is due to laziness (Gwernan-Jones and Burden, 2010; Dyslexia Action, 2012).

The final, and most significant, misconception is that dyslexia can be overcome. Research shows that there are effective instructional strategies that lessen the impact of dyslexia; however, dyslexia cannot be overcome (Shaywitz, 1998). Adults with dyslexia will still have difficulty reading fluently because of the significant time and effort required to recognize unknown words despite receiving intensive intervention focusing on reading connected text, modeling, and practicing fluent reading (Shaywitz, 1998). Furthermore, students with dyslexia do not just need more time to outgrow the difficulty. However, the earlier students are identified and provided with systematic interventions, the greater the gains in reading achievement.

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I aimed at developing a theoretical basis for understanding possible causes of dyslexia by referring to past studies in relation to Frith's framework for understanding dyslexia. I mainly focused on the three perspectives, including; biological, cognitive and behavioural aspects as potential causes of dyslexia. Various researchers have sought to identify possible causes of dyslexia resulting in different schools of thought. Some scholars have fundamentally doubted whether dyslexia existed hence making the subject further controversial. The cognitive

theories suggest that although dyslexia can manifest itself in many ways, some studies indicate there may be a single cause, for example, the phonological deficit.

While on one hand there are some researchers who assert that phonological processing difficulties are fundamental to dyslexia and can be found in all individuals with dyslexia; on the other hand, there are others who accept the phonological deficit theory but see phonological problems as a symptom of dyslexia, while the actual cause is related to brain structure. As a result, some tasks may be less 'automatic' for individuals with dyslexia, hence requiring more of their concentration and attention than is the case for individuals without dyslexia. Lack of automaticity in basic skills such as literacy and numeracy could mean that people with dyslexia are more likely to experience processing overload when they are required to carry out new or complex tasks. They may need far more practice at any skill before they achieve automaticity. This condition is linked with differences in the structure of the cerebellum. Some theorists regard inefficient working memory as a key underlying factor in dyslexia.

The main focus in the cognitive theories is the phonological processing difficulty, which affects reading, spelling, naming and other phonological tasks. Until recently, the phonological deficit hypothesis was the consensus view of the majority of dyslexia researchers; the theory was, however, challenged due to its inability to explain the occurrence of sensory and motor disorders in individuals with dyslexia.

The behavioural and emotional aspect of dyslexia is one of the most commonly overlooked areas. For example, educators and parents are very quick to notice

problems in the children's reading, writing, spelling and arithmetic, and usually fail to recognise other effects such as lack of motivation, low self-esteem and irritability, which develop as a result of persistent school failure leading to psychological pressure on the part of the child. The frustration resulting from prolonged failure on a range of curriculum subjects at school, leads to the feeling of insecurity and lack of confidence, which can have profound effects upon the child's social status, friendship patterns, and acceptance as well as in the ability to adjust to new settings.

Tensions associated with persistent school failure can lead to aggressive and antisocial behaviour while stress and insecurity can lead to information-processing difficulties. To avoid failure, students with dyslexia may adopt strategies of avoidance and self-blame; on the other hand, teachers and parents/carers may get frustrated by teaching the same thing repeatedly before a child with dyslexia can grasp the concepts being taught, which apparently is made worse by the fact that children with dyslexia have no physical signs of disability.

In this chapter I also examined the social interactive theory of dyslexia to determine how biological, cognitive and behavioural attributes can be influenced by the environment to either reduce the effects of dyslexia or to worsen the difficulty. There is evidence that physical environment can have direct or indirect effects on children's learning, which in turn, may influence developmental outcomes such as learning and language development.

From the literature review in this chapter, there is evidence that although dyslexia is not a disease that can be cured, early identification and intervention and with proper

management of individuals with dyslexia, it would be possible to overcome most of the learning barriers faced by children with dyslexia to enable them reach their full potential. Environmental factors, as indicated in Figure 2 are key components of the three factors deemed to cause dyslexia. This chapter demonstrates the need for collaboration between teachers and parents in supporting children with dyslexia achieve their career goals. It also reveals the significance of the physical environment, whether home environment or school environment in promoting the education of children with dyslexia which if ignored can have detrimental effects on the educational and emotional development of children with dyslexia.

3 THE SAUDI CONTEXT

3.1 Introduction

Prior to investigating the educational provision for students with SpLD in primary schools in KSA, it was important to provide background information within the context where this study undertaken; hence, this chapter includes a brief overview of the education system and the historical background of SEN in KSA. The main aim of this chapter is to give an overview of the educational provision for students with SpLD in primary education settings in KSA. In this chapter I discussed how the concept and definition of SpLD are understood in KSA and in other contexts. Subsequently, a discussion on the educational provision for students with SpLD is presented, that is categorised into three main subheadings; inclusion of SpLD, exclusion of SpLD and the awareness of SpLD in KSA.

3.2 Background information

KSA is an Arab state in Western Asia constituting the bulk of the Arabian Peninsula. The kingdom lies at the crossroads of three continents: Asia, Africa, and Europe. It occupies approximately 2,250,000 square kilometres (868,730 square miles) (Zuhur, 2011). KSA lies in a strategically important position; it is the largest country in the region and the birthplace of Islam and Guardian of its most sacred shrine (Zuhur, 2011).

The country is divided into 13 regions; each region is divided into governorates. My study took place in one city in KSA; I conducted the study in two primary schools located in the west region on the coast of the Red Sea, which is the major urban center

of western Saudi Arabia. It is the largest city in Makkah Province, the largest sea port on the Red Sea, and the second-largest city in KSA after the capital city, Riyadh. With a population currently at 3.4 million people, the city is an important commercial hub in KSA (General Authority for Statistics, 2016).

The city is well known for its diverse cultures, breath-taking beaches, and traditional markets reflecting the local customs, and attractive folklore (Farsi, 1991). The city is also the principal gateway to Makkah, Islam's holiest city, which able-bodied Muslims are required to visit at least once in their lifetime. It is also a gateway to Medina, the second holiest place in Islam (Farsi, 1991).

Interesting and multifaceted religious traditions of the local people have found reflection in various fields of their lives. The locals are very sensitive to their customs, and they do all they can to keep and maintain their national colour. The Arabic language remains the main national pride of local residents. It is considered one of the most complex and beautiful languages around the world (Farsi, 1991).

The concept of 'family' is also of particular importance for indigenous inhabitants. As a rule, a family consists of representatives of several generations, who continue living together and have a shared household. The oldest man is considered the head of the family until he passes on when the role is usually transferred to the next eldest member within the family (Farsi, 1991).

In KSA, all education policies are subject to government control. The curriculum, syllabus and textbooks are uniform throughout the country. The administration of education is controlled through the MoE (Ministry of Education, 2013). Though there

are other governmental agencies which have some educational responsibilities, the MoE is the main service provider.

There are forty-two educational districts throughout KSA, all under the Ministry of Education. District offices work as links between the local schools and the MoE. The Ministry is responsible for the provision of school buildings, including construction and maintenance. It is also charged with equipping schools, providing materials, and supplying students with textbooks. The MoE has the responsibility to oversee implementation of education policy in the country (Ministry of Education, 2013).

3.3 Overview of the education system in KSA

The focus on education has existed in KSA since the 18th century (Ministry of Education, 2008). The background of education is fundamentally based on Islam religion. This is because education was seen as a tool for spreading Islamic faith. It is believed that the first word revealed in the Qur'an was 'Iqra' which means 'Read!'; 'Seek knowledge!'; 'Educate yourselves!'; 'Be educated' (Alkhuli, 2009). As a result, this made Islamic education to be highly recognised as the ultimate way of attaining knowledge. Therefore, it is essential to highlight the role played by Islamic education in ensuring that literacy level was improved in KSA. Islam is the established religion in KSA, and as such its institutions receive government support.

Modern education had its challenges in that girls were not given the opportunity to attend school for fear that they would pose a challenge to men and hence fail to play their role as a wife (Al Rawaf and Simmins, 1991). It was, however, until 1964, when public education for girls begun. This happened despite great

opposition from different quarters. At present, the government of Saudi Arabia has ensured that education is free to all children bridging the gap between the boys and the girls (Ministry of Education, 2008).

Currently, the government of KSA considers education as one of the most important elements to the country's development, it is considered as a fundamental factor for the development of the economy of KSA. By the end of 19th century, Islamic education was replaced to a greater extent with the modern education. This led to establishment of different sectors that offered non-religious education, which aimed at enhancing literacy skills because it promoted reading and writing skills. Education system in KSA has four distinctive characteristics: 'an emphasis on Islam, a centralized educational system, separate education for men and women, and state financial support' (Ministry of Education, 2008).

The introduction of modern education resulted in establishment of the MoE in 1957 (Ministry of Education, 2008). The MoE is responsible for providing a free and appropriate education for all students, including those with special needs (Al-Salloom, 1995; Ministry of Education, 2008). Establishment of the MoE aimed to increase the number of students going to schools hence raising the level of literacy in KSA.

The ministry oversees the development of primary schools, intermediate schools, secondary schools and tertiary colleges. It is also in charge of educational provision, including general education (elementary, intermediate and secondary), special education, as well as adult and literacy education (Al-Sadan, 2000; Ministry of Education, 2008). Education in KSA is free and compulsory with great

expansion at all the three levels, which include six years elementary education, three years intermediate education, and three years of secondary education (See figure 1 below, and appendix 24 for the curriculum in KSA).

There is a curriculum department in the MoE which ensures the syllabuses are unified throughout the kingdom. The department is responsible for curriculum development and preparation of textbooks. For each subject and grade there is a textbook which must be used in all schools in KSA, including public schools. The academic year is divided into two semesters, each of 18 weeks duration. The first 16 weeks are for teaching and learning activities and the last two for the final examinations. Students prepare and study for these examinations from the textbooks, and teachers are expected to set exam questions from them and not to cover any topic not included in the syllabus (Al-Sadan, 2000; Ministry of Education, 2008).

Progression from one level to another is determined by a students' performance in the final national examination offered after every level. For example, for a student to progress from primary to intermediate, they have to pass the national examination after the six year in primary. Students are made to repeat classes if they do not perform to the teachers' expectations. Consequently, students with SpLD and other learning disabilities may spend more years at one level due to repetition as compared to their peers (Al-Sadan, 2000; Ministry of Education, 2008). Section 2.4 and 2.5 provide more details on SEN in KSA.

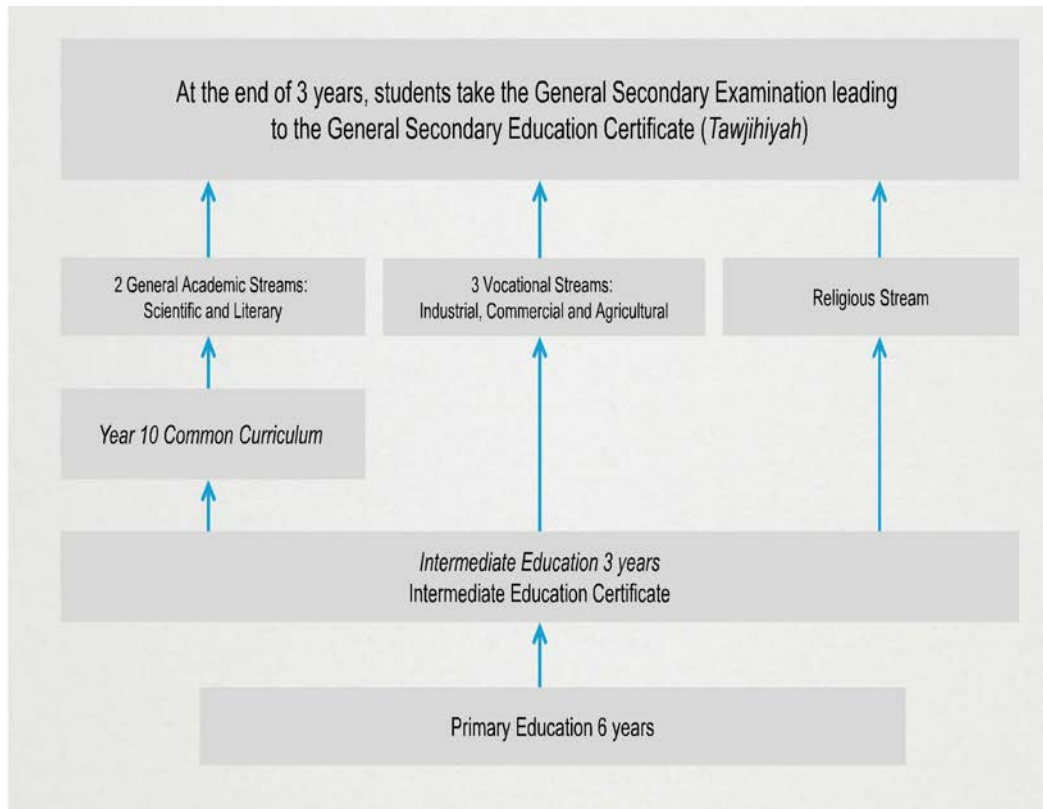


Figure 2: Structure of Education in KSA (Mihael, 2015)

3.4 A historical view: SEN in KSA

Until the year 1958, people with a disability in KSA were deprived of basic education since they were regarded as unproductive in the society (Al-Ajmi, 2006; Al-Jadid, 2013; Aldabas, 2015). As a result, limited support was provided to them by the Saudi Government. It was the responsibility of their parents to meet basic needs of their children with disability, including meeting their educational needs (Al-Ajmi, 2006; Al-Jadid, 2013). After 1958, there was a change of direction in the education system such that the government started providing educational services to students with SEN. In that year, 1958, a special institution was established for children with visual impairment, which was later named the ‘Scientific Institution’ (Al-Salloom, 1995). By the year 1962, provision for children with SEN was

expanded to cater for children with other disabilities, such as ‘mental retardation’ (as they were referred to) and hearing impairment (Afeafe, 2000; Aldabas, 2015). In the same year, there were three different institutions formed in three cities in KSA for children with SEN (Al-Mousa, 1999). Further institutions for children with hearing impairment and those with ‘mental retardation’ were formed in 1972. The movement towards supporting children with SEN in KSA resulted in increased support by the government with the aim of providing quality education provisions and equality for all children.

In its bid to improve the educational provision for students with SEN, KSA adopted a lot from what was happening in the western countries, which resulted in major developments in the education sector with regard to meeting the educational needs for children with disabilities. Teachers who had the responsibility to teach children with SEN were sent abroad to train in special needs education. The government established regulations for Special Education Programs and Institutes (RESPI) (Alquraini, 2007), which led to an increase in the range of disabilities to be formally included in the education system. The RESPI ensures “a free and appropriate education and also specifies how schools must provide these services” (Alquraini, 2007: 151). Terms such as Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) were introduced, that focused on removing the barriers towards learning. This led to political initiatives to help people with disabilities in KSA. Just like in the UK, Individual Education Plans (IEPs) which outline the needs and responsibilities of an individual, establishing a chain of accountability and identifying specific barriers to learning were also introduced.

In the report compiled by the World Health Organisation in 2000 analysing health systems in 191 countries, KSA was ranked 26th (World Health Organization, 2000). This is an indicator that the government was taking an initiative to meet the needs of person not only with health issues but also with a disability (Khaliq, 2012). Nonetheless, challenges faced by people with disability in KSA seem to be perpetual particularly due to the conflict between the social model of disability which is rooted in cultural beliefs and other social factors, and the medical model which is rooted in the biological factors. (Farrell, 2004; Hakim and Jaganjac, 2005; Al-Jadid, 2013).

3.5 Islamic law and disability in KSA

Although there are different laws to address the rights of people with disabilities in KSA, they are still marginalized and excluded from accessing their rights. This results in a form of social disadvantage and relegation to the fringe of society (Al-Khateeb and Hadidi, 2009). Islamic Law (also known as Sharia Law) acknowledges the rights for people with disabilities, in what can be argued as a progressive social model (Abu Alia, and Mulhem, 1998; Al-Jadid, 2013). In the Holy Quran for example, it is believed that Prophet Mohammed (P.B.U.H) initiated this model when he asked the blind beggar to attend to his prayers rather than staying at home (Abu Alia, and Mulhem, 1998; Al-Mousa, 2010). Sharia Law therefore provides rights for people with disabilities so that they can as much as possible live a normal and well-balanced life.

3.6 The Social model and the medical model of disability

According to Almalki et al. (2011) the medical model of disability reflects a general trend towards a curative approach to persons with disability; the approach seeks to ‘treat’ the individual in an attempt to ‘fix’ the problem. The model further seeks to eliminate or to prevent possible occurrence of the defect by coming up with health programmes targeting what are believed to be possible causes of specific disabilities. Saudi Arabian culture favours ‘fixing’ the disability rather than preventing (Saggar and Bittles, 2008).

The social model on other hand targets the removal of barriers believed to prevent people with disability from participating in the society. In KSA for example, King Salman of KSA has through various platforms demonstrated his commitment to making Riyadh (capital city of KSA) the country’s first disabled-friendly, city to mirror what he called Saudi Arabia’s “humanitarian” reputation (Arab News, 2011). He was awarded the ‘Arab Pioneers Award’ for his services to the disabled (Arab News, 2011). Salman’s support for persons with disability and his urge to the government and other sectors to follow suit is an indicator that there is a shift towards challenging the negative beliefs and perceptions associated with disability in KSA. Although KSA is moving towards a more practical approach to meeting the needs of persons with disability just like the rest of the world, nonetheless, proponents of the social model of disabilities like Saggar and Bittles, (2008) argue that if the government and other sectors would embrace fully the social model, there would be considerable success in meeting the needs of children with disability including those with SpLD.

3.7 The concept of SpLD in KSA and other contexts

In KSA, there is little data available regarding types of disabilities found among children and the extent to which the policy makers and the government intervene to alleviate the situation (Smith, 2004). Although some researchers such as Al-Hano (2006) state that around 5% of the Saudi students have SpLD, a figure which according to Al-Khateeb and Hadidi, (2010) continues to grow over time, the Ministry of Education (2011) maintains that it is difficult to ascertain the actual figure because there is no defined process for assessing children with SpLD in KSA. Moreover, Al-Ahmadi (2009) argues that assessment of SpLD is significantly dependent on the teachers' competence and ability to distinguish between SpLD and other disabilities, which most teachers in KSA find difficult to do due to lack of training.

For better understanding of SpLD, I found it necessary to examine different terminologies related to SpLD that are used in the UK and in the USA. Also the primacy of both the UK and USA was necessary to be examined for better understanding of SpLD (Elliot and Grigorenko, 2014). The USA was considered because the education system in KSA is based on the USA system, as Alnaim (2015) indicates that most theories on support for children with 'learning disabilities' in KSA are likely to be influenced by USA theories and practice (Alnaim, 2015). I chose the UK because it is one of the countries where knowledge of the area of dyslexia is quite developed (Elliot and Grigorenko, 2014), and that is where I did my Master's degree and this study as well. Comparison of what happens in these three countries helped in determining what could be learnt from countries where provision for children with SEN is well advanced.

For example in England, Section 6.30 of the SEND Code of Practice states that the term LD covers ‘a wide range of needs, including moderate learning difficulties (MLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD), where children are likely to need support in all areas of the curriculum and associated difficulties with mobility and communication, through to profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), where children are likely to have severe and complex learning difficulties as well as a physical disability or sensory impairment. Section 6.31 states that ‘Specific learning difficulties (SpLD), affect one or more specific aspects of learning. This encompasses a range of conditions such as dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia’ (DfE, 2015).

The U.S. Department of Education defines specific learning disability as ‘a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia’ (U.S. Department of Education, 2007: 28). Therefore the term ‘specific learning disability’ is used in USA in contrast to the term used in the UK which is ‘specific learning difficulties/ dyslexia.

The Saudi definition of specific learning disabilities is more or less like the one used in the USA, the Ministry of Education (2013: 23) defines ‘learning disability’ as:

Disorders in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using spoken and written language which are manifested in disorders in listening, thinking, talking, reading, writing, spelling, or arithmetic and are not due to factors related to mental retardation, visual or hearing impairments, or educational, social, and familial factors.

The MoE in KSA further defines ‘learning disability’ as skills deficiencies, which are associated with different subjects. In that case children with LD are generally regarded as low academic achievers in some subjects in school; those without any other disabilities but still in need of different SEN provision from other provisions provided for learners with other disabilities (Al-Mousa, 2010). ‘Learning disability’ in KSA covers the broader focus of the disorders associated with the basic phonological processes involved in understanding or using spoken or written language. The term LD is considered as reading, writing and spelling difficulties (Al-Mousa, 2010; Ministry of Education, 2013). In contrast, ‘learning disability’ in the UK is generally applied to people with generalised (as opposed to specific) difficulties who are of low intelligence and often lack mental capacity (British Dyslexia Association, 2007). At this point, it is very important to clarify that since I presented the research in a university in the UK, therefore, the terminology ‘SpLD’ was used synonymously with the term ‘dyslexia’ throughout in the study.

3.8 Dyslexia: defining the concepts

According to Elliott and Grigorenko (2014: 5), defining dyslexia is seemingly both easy and difficult. It is easy because there is a general agreement that it concerns ‘inherent and particular difficulties encountered by those who struggle to read text’. It is also difficult in that there is no universally accepted definition of dyslexia. For example, in the KSA and the USA, the term “dyslexia” is hardly used to describe students fitting the criteria of the disorder. Instead the term “specific learning disability (SLD)” is used which in the USA is specified in the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA, 2004). As I have stated earlier, most educators in KSA

adopted the USA education system by placing students with dyslexia under the larger umbrella term, SLD consequently denying them appropriate interventions and accommodations fitting students with dyslexia (Al-Mousa, 2010).

In the UK where the support for students with dyslexia is quite developed, there is clear definition of dyslexia as a distinct type of SpLD. For example the British Dyslexia Association (2007), defines dyslexia as:

A specific learning difficulty that mainly affects the development of literacy and language related skills. It is likely to be present at birth and to be life-long in its effects. It is characterised by difficulties with phonological processing, rapid naming, working memory, processing speed, and the automatic development of skills that may not match up to an individual's other cognitive abilities (British Dyslexia Association, 2007).

One of the popular UK researchers – and the one that my theoretical framework is based on in this study – Frith (1999: 192) states that ‘dyslexia can be defined as a neuro-developmental disorder with a biological origin and behavioural signs which extend far beyond problems with written language. At the cognitive level, putative causes of the behavioural signs and symptoms of the condition can be specified’.

As noted in the definitions above, dyslexia is defined as a neurological, cognitive and behavioural disorder which affects development of literacy skills. In the KSA where the term LD is used to include children with dyslexia, the MoE does not consider neurological, cognitive and behavioural disorders within the working definition for LD. In the KSA SpLD is defined by the Ministry of Education (2013: 23) as

Disorders in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using spoken and written language which are manifested in disorders in listening, thinking, talking, reading, writing, spelling, or

arithmetic and are not due to factors related to mental retardation, visual or hearing impairments, or educational, social, and familial factor.

The analysis of these differences however reflects the mutual agreement on the involvement of neurological, cognitive and behavioural perspectives for the better understanding of dyslexia. According to Frith (1995) it is important when considering developmental disorders to separate the biological, the cognitive and the behavioural levels of explanation. Importantly, it is necessary to acknowledge that developmental disorders are dynamic and there are environmental interactions at all levels. Therefore, the behavioural manifestations of disorders, such as dyslexia, change with time, and also in different contexts. It also strengthens the use of Frith's (1995) theoretical framework for this research. Furthermore, based on the mutually agreed aspects of dyslexia, it is worth examining how educational provisions in primary schools in KSA have focused on these aspects.

3.9 Educational provision for students with SpLD in primary schools in KSA

In this section I focus on the issue of the current educational provision for students with SpLD in primary settings in KSA.

In KSA the Ministry of Education (2013) has a provision for supporting children with SpLD. This provision provides those children with the same rights as the rest of the other students. Also, this provision is developed in order to share knowledge and increase effectiveness of the system by providing a specific framework and a positive approach to address the students' difficulties. Children with SpLD are divided into different categories requiring special attention, programmes and care, so that they gain knowledge and are able to be a part of a social circle in their

environment (Ministry of Education, 2013). The following are some of the aims of the provision for children with SpLD in KSA:

- a. Ensuring that consistent and effective practices are provided to all the concerned students to identify the needs of all the individuals who have SpLD so that they can be given specialist expertise and skills.
- b. Extending the knowledge of the policy maker and understand the growing needs of those students.
- c. Keeping complete knowledge and literacy about SpLD and developing special educational needs, which seem to be more influential.
- d. Addressing different challenges and understand complex needs which are associated with the children with SpLD.
- e. Formulating different solutions and responding more quickly to the changes in the way people interact or communicate by the means of using technology (Eaude, 1999; Ministry of Education, 2002).

These programmes are aiming to achieve inclusion of children with SpLD in regular primary schools and to change people's attitudes towards students with disability in general. The next section discusses the process of the educational provision in KSA through providing the appropriate provision.

3.9.1 Inclusion of students with SpLD in primary settings in KSA

The Salamanca statement or framework regarding children with SEN comprised different policies, principles, and practices in special needs education, proclaiming that each child has the basic right to get full education and should be given a complete opportunity to prove himself or herself (UNESCO, 1994; Norwich,

2014a). The statement further stated that each child is different, having his or her own abilities, interests, and learning needs; therefore, education systems should be implemented and designed for a wide diversity (Norwich, 2008; Norwich, 2012). The statement urged the governments to pay greater attention to students with SEN, increasing their budgets and improving their education system, by adopting laws and policies to support inclusive education at the national level, regional level and the international level (Dyson, 1996; Norwich and Avramidis, 2002).

The Salamanca statement also takes account of the social inclusion aspect within the policy making process which the UK has made a lot of effort to adopt. In KSA, SEN policies are yet to be implemented which should also be incorporated into the Children and Families Act (2014). According to Norwich (2014b), in the last 30 years the UK has taken a radical approach to meet the needs of students with a SEN statement, regardless of the school they attend. On the contrary in KSA just a few children with SEN in selected schools are supported by the government (Al-Hano, 2006; Al-Jadid, 2013; Alnaim, 2015). This happens despite the existence of key SEN policy documents within KSA, including legislation regarding disability, the Disability Code, and the Regulations of Special Education Programs and Institutes (RSEPI) (Alquraini, 2010). All these policy documents state that students with SpLD should be offered free and appropriate education (Alquraini, 2010). Although these policies encourage integration in KSA, there is no particular link found between regular and special schools. This can be evidenced by the presence of isolated special and SpLD schools.

Different criteria are used for the identification of students with SpLD, comprising phonological tests and physical body assessments. Considering the general identification tests, in KSA, there are no specific standardised tests for students with SpLD. Although they have phonological deficits or reading/writing/spelling difficulties, according to Al-Mousa (2010) simple identification tests are offered to them, which are actually below their individual literacy level. The tests are designed according to the lower skills in Arabic literacy for each grade. In addition, when for example a student in the fourth grade is being identified with SpLD, the SEN teacher assesses the student starting with the literacy skills assessment for the third grade and then the second grade and so on (Al-Mousa, 2010; Ministry of Education, 2013).

According to the SEN policy in KSA, children with SpLD may show the following characteristics:

1. Difficulty in learning that is meaningfully greater than the level of difficulty experienced by the majority of children of the same age
2. Disparity between learning abilities and actual level of academic acquisition generally
3. Lack of developmental balance in learning abilities that is reflected in the form of differences in the level of acquisition of various subjects (Khazaleh and Al-Khateeb, 2011; Ministry of Education, 2013).

The criteria to decide whether a child has SpLD in KSA include repeated mistakes in spellings, illegible or untidy handwriting, and improper sequencing. In addition to that, an inability to perform very simple arithmetical calculations is considered

the hallmark that a child has SpLD (Fraihat, 2007). It is essential for the society, the family and the children themselves that SpLD is identified at an early stage for appropriate intervention measures, rather than waiting until it is too late, so that a child with SpLD is identified due to chronic poor academic performance.

According to Snowling et al. (1997); Snowling and Stackhouse (2013), children with dyslexia specifically display impairments of phonological awareness, phonological coding in their verbal short-term memory, and naming and speech perception and production. Therefore, in order to identify such children, phonological assessments can contribute vitally against their discrimination from the regular students. Frith (1995) in her research has also categorised the set of tests (logographic skills strategy, alphabetic skills strategy and orthographic skills test) used to create a shared framework for students with dyslexia on the three levels i.e. biological, cognitive, and behavioural.

Frith (1995) mentions that for identifying the problematic phoneme (P), grapheme (G), and grapheme-phoneme (G-P) factors in the dyslexia students, reading, a spelling test, a non-word reading test, a phoneme awareness test, a naming speed test, a verbal IQ test, and nonverbal tests can help in identifying the issues from the behaviours of the students (Frith, 1985; Frith, 1986; Morton, 1989; Frith et al., 1991, Morton and Frith, 1995; Frith, 1998).

On the other hand, dyslexia was conceptualised as a specific reading difficulty influencing children for whom reading achievement was below that expected on the basis of a child's age and intelligence quotient (IQ). Stanovich (1994) has highlighted the use of 'discrepancy measurements' for the identification of poor

readers with distinct aetiologies, as no one can argue about the logical presence of distinct aetiologies among the poor readers. However, Snowling (2012) argues that the use of 'discrepancy definition' of dyslexia has fallen from use gradually, and it is now recognised that dyslexia occurs across the IQ spectrum, although it needs to be borne in mind that, in terms of reading comprehension, those with higher IQ are likely to do better.

Ziegler and Goswami, (2005) argue that the development of reading depends on phonological awareness across all languages because languages vary in the consistency with which phonology is represented in orthography. They also demonstrate that children with dyslexia from different countries show quite similar phonological deficits. Also, they state that the assessment of dyslexia in most languages follows the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's definition of a specific problem with reading and spelling that cannot be accounted for by low intelligence, poor educational opportunities, or obvious sensory or neurological damage.

Elbeheri et al. (2009, 2010), as well as Elbeheri and Reid (2006) on the other hand recognise the differences between Arabic students' and western students' literacy difficulties and phonological deficits. The authors consider the difference in the relationship between letters and sounds across languages and champion for the need of standardised Arabic measures and scales. They define Arabic as an entirely different language as compared to other languages. Therefore, separate measures of non-word reading, sound deletion, rapid naming and non-word repetition have been formulated and harmonized for Arabic speaking children in the Gulf Region (Elbeheri et al., 2009; Elbeheri et al., 2010).

From the case I cited in Chapter one regarding my nephew, children with SpLD are often rejected and ridiculed not only by their peers but also by the teachers as well due to poor performance in school which can consequently lead to withdrawal and delinquency (Mortimore, 2008; Al-Ahmadi, 2009). Al-Ahmadi (2009) also maintains that inclusion offers mixed-group integration which would foster understanding and acceptance of differences among students. But she also found that ‘regular teachers’ strongly believed that inclusion of students with SpLD in general classes would likely have a negative effect on their emotional development. Teachers strongly agreed that isolation of students with SpLD has a beneficial effect on their social and emotional development (Al-Ahmadi, 2009).

Children with SEN in KSA generally receive social, educational, and psychological support in different settings (Al-Mousa, 2010; Ministry of Education, 2013; Aldabas, 2015). In schools for example, such services are offered in the following settings:

1. Regular classroom with support of SEN teacher.

The students with SEN learn in the regular school. A counsellor visits the school from time to time in order to provide guidance and consultation. The counsellor does not teach the students with SEN or contact their parents. He/she only advises classroom teachers on how to deal with students with SEN and how to teach them.

2. Regular classroom with services of SEN mobile teacher.

The students with SEN learn in the regular schools. The school is not provided with a SEN teacher, therefore a mobile SEN teacher visits the school according to a regular timetable and gives the students with SEN additional support. The SEN mobile teacher implements the same provision that every SEN teacher does. He/she must

provide the academic and technical service which helps the students with SEN overcome their barriers in education.

3. Regular classroom with services of resource room.

The students with SEN learn in the regular classrooms most of the time but are regularly withdrawn for extra support in the resource room by the SEN teacher. The school is provided with a SEN teacher and a resource room.

4. Special unit.

These are special classrooms within regular school. They generally have a SEN teacher who teaches children with SEN separately in these special classrooms. The students with SEN have the opportunity to engage with the rest of the students during break time. The special units only apply to specific categories of SEN, for example, hearing impairments, visual impairments and Down's syndrome.

5. Daytime special school.

These are basically non-residential special schools from which students return home at the end of the day. The schools are categorized as for specific special needs. For example there are special schools for students with a hearing impairment, or for the visually impaired. Children with similar disabilities receive their education with the additional support from SEN teachers all school day, then return to their homes at the end of the day.

6. Residential special schools

These are categorised as special schools for children with a similar disability, like a visual impairment, hearing impairment or 'mentally retardation'. Just like the name states, there are boarding special schools where the students would stay for a whole

term. The students receive specialised support from SEN teachers. The students are accommodated in the school but they are regularly visited by their parents.

Students with SpLD benefit from regular classroom with services of resource room (Ministry of Education, 2013). There are certain criteria set by the MoE in order to offer schools with support programmes for students with SpLD (Ministry of Education, 2013). There is a committee in the MoE responsible for visiting schools and choosing the schools that meet their criteria. These criteria are:

- School location: the school should be located in a high population district.
- School population: the number of the students in the school should be very high.
- School building: the school building should be a governmental building, built by the MoE.
- Student advisor: there should be a student advisor in the school.

The SEN policy in KSA states that the students with SpLD are not allowed to spend more than 50% of their entire school hours in the resource room, due to factors like loneliness, which can negatively influence their minds the (Ministry of Education, 2013). Considering the special unit, students with SpLD should have the opportunity to engage in two-way communication and healthy interaction with their peers during their curricular and extracurricular activities. This would increase their ability to adapt to new environments and grasp new ideas from others (Bairat, 2005).

Resource rooms are considered vital in the inclusion of children with SpLD in KSA (Ministry of Education, 2013). A resource room is defined as a room where

students with specific learning difficulties are offered additional support than their mainstream classes. The resource rooms are equipped with all types of learning resources and are managed by the special education teacher (Elbeheri and Reid, 2006; Alquraini, 2010; Somainy et al., 2012; Ministry of Education, 2013).

However, Alquraini (2010) emphasises that in KSA, SEN teachers focus on improving the low level literacy skills experienced by children with SpLD. Lewis and Norwich (2001), also support the importance of focusing on low level literacy skills in children with SpLD. According to Lewis and Norwich (2001), slow learners require more intense and explicit planning than their peers. Fletcher et al. (2009: 181) argue that ‘the distinction between common teaching principles and strategies and different practical ways of applying and implementing them for students with difficulties in learning is a crucial one’.

Resource room teachers have an important role to play in terms of designing the individualized educational plans (IEPs) that address the special needs of the students joining the resource room (Somainy et al., 2012). As active members in each student’s IEPs, these teachers are also a critical link between learning in the resource room and both regular classroom teachers and parents. According to McQuarrie and Zarry (1999) resource room teachers play numerous roles that all contribute to improving the academic skills of students with SpLD. They also perform/offer evaluation, guidance, and cooperation with/for parents, teachers of the regular classrooms, and school administrators.

However, Bryan, Burstein and Egul (2004) point out that those students with SpLD who frequently get support in the resources rooms tend to be more susceptible to

social and emotional problems when compared with their regular classroom peers. They tend to experience low self-esteem and a lack of acceptance by others. Part of this may stem from low social cognition and the misunderstanding of the feelings and reactions of others. Bender, Rosenkrans and Crane (1999) contend that the social and emotional problems of students with SpLD tend to be more pronounced among those who struggle with reading and writing difficulties. They are also more visible among students who have difficulty performing place-visual tasks, those challenged by self-organization, and those with nonverbal disabilities.

Teachers perform an important part of the children's with SpLD environment, both in providing and facilitating the educational climate for the students and in identifying and addressing their personal, social and emotional needs. Humphry (2002) indicated that children who attended mainstream schools had significantly lower levels of self-esteem related to reading ability than the other groups. Humphry (2002) also indicated that teachers in SpLD units provide a more welcoming and facilitative environment for children with dyslexia. Therefore it is essential that teachers in mainstream schools follow the example set in the SpLD units, so that children with SpLD are given a better chance to achieve excellence.

There is a wide debate on teachers' and parents' perception about the resource rooms. For example, according to Somaily et al. (2012) in KSA parents of students with SpLD have positive attitudes towards the resource rooms. They consider such programmes and resources as a good step to helping the community as well as parents in accepting children with SEN. In contrast, Khazaleh and Al-Khateeb (2011) state that parents of children placed who receive support in the resource

rooms feel that their children are made to feel inferior as compared to their peers, and that they generally lag behind others since they are drawn from the regular classrooms to be taken to the resource rooms. In support of the resource rooms, Griffiths et al. (2004) argue that in the western countries, resource rooms are recognised as a way for establishing parent-teachers' partnerships in an inclusive extended professionalism approach.

3.9.2 Exclusion of SpLD students from general classrooms

In this section I focus on the issue regarding teachers' and parents' perception about inclusion of SpLD students in regular classrooms. Lewis and Norwich (2004) and Norwich (2014c) show that at international levels, teachers recognise inclusion of students with SpLD in the general classroom as a problem because they see them as special children who require special teaching. Norwich (2014c: 495) pointed out two underlying issues which are "difference as enabling–stigmatising (dilemmas of difference) and participation–protection, both of which can lead to significant dilemmas" These special needs groups therefore require a strong specialist approach. For example, studies in some of the Arab countries reveal that due to lack of attainment skills and their persistent difficulties in fulfilling the socio-cultural opportunities, teachers try to exclude the students with SpLD from the 'normal' students. They are viewed as an extra burden to the teachers (Elbaum and Vaughn, 2001; Al-Nahdi, 2007; Al-Ahmadi, 2009; Al-Mousa, 2010; Alquraini, 2011).

While in the UK, for example, classrooms generally contain between 20-25 students (Department for Education, 2011), in KSA, classrooms contain between 35-40 students. These are considered too large to be managed and controlled by one instructor or teacher (Altinok and Kingdon, 2009). Due to the extra support required for students with SpLD, hence increasing the responsibility of the teacher, most teachers in KSA are generally opposed to inclusion of children with SpLD in the regular classrooms; teachers prefer to exclude such children from the regular classrooms (Al-Ahmadi, 2009).

Corbett and Norwich (2013) have also stressed the impact of curriculum demands on the teachers' willingness to include students with SpLD in the regular classrooms. For example in the KSA, the national curriculum does not take account of the diversity of learners, and the interconnections between the pedagogy, the curriculum and the organization of provisions for children with SEN (Al-Nahdi, 2007; Al-Mousa, 2010; Alquraini, 2010). The issue of curriculum demands also emerged from the teachers during data collection as most of them complained about curriculum burden and limited time and resources available.

Teachers with more negative implicit attitudes toward dyslexia give students with dyslexia more negative ratings of writing achievement, and the difference in the spelling achievement of students with dyslexia is larger than in the reference group of students without disabilities. Hornstra et al. (2010) suggest that teachers may be unwilling to explicitly report negative attitudes toward dyslexia, as this may be seen as socially undesirable. Hornstra et al. (2010) also suggest that teachers' implicit attitudes may affect fast and intuitive reactions, such as where the teacher must deal

with many students at once and often has to react fast. This is when non-verbal behaviour may be playing a mediating role between teacher attitude and the achievement of students with dyslexia. Therefore, there is a need for greater awareness of how negative attitudes of teachers of inclusive classrooms may be influencing the learning of students with dyslexia. More research is needed to determine if this phenomenon is occurring internationally.

3.9.3 Awareness of SpLD in KSA

A study by Al-Ahmadi (2009) indicates that the majority of the teachers in KSA lack adequate training or experience to work with learners with SEN. According to Poulou and Norwich (2000), Avramidis and Norwich (2003), and Nash and Norwich (2010), teachers' perceptions of, and acceptance for, children with SEN is greatly influenced by factors such as training and awareness on how to work with children with SEN; teachers who are trained in SEN are therefore more likely to be willing to accommodate the children in their regular classrooms. It is on this premise that scholars like Boyle et al. (2011) recommend SEN students be placed in small, homogeneous groups administered and taught by a well-trained instructor specializing in the specific types of disabilities students possess.

Research comparing teachers' acceptance of children with SEN and their knowledge of inclusion indicates that there is no significant relationship between teachers' experience and their acceptance of children with special needs, especially those with SpLD (Nash and Norwich, 2010). Nonetheless, other studies indicate that teachers with SEN training are more receptive to children with SEN than their counterparts who are not trained (McNamara, 1989; Norwich and Daniels, 1997).

On the other hand, Saudi Arabian studies, such as Al-Ahmadi, 2009; Somaily et al. 2012; and Alquraini, 2013, as well as academic literature from different researchers, have confirmed the importance of parents' awareness and their involvement in their children's education (DfEE, 1997; DfES, 2001; DENI, 2005).

International research has consistently shown that parental involvement positively affects the outcomes of schooling (e.g. Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003; Diamond, Wang and Gomez, 2004). When parents work in partnership with schools and educational practitioners they can help their children 'build a pro-social, pro-learning self-concept and high educational aspirations' (Hartas, 2008).

However, the systems supporting parental involvement need to be adapted to meet the distinctive strengths and needs of each family, requiring that the cultural context; support networks; understandings of SEN and disability; and the parents' capacity to access resources and expertise are taken into account (Gardner et al., 2003).

As I mentioned earlier in Section 3.2, in KSA families play an important role in their children's lives. The family is considered to be the primary basis of identity and status for the individual, and the immediate focus of individual loyalty, just as it was among those who recognized a tribal affiliation (Al rubiyea, 2010). Families of children with dyslexia are sometimes lack awareness of the disability (Al-Mousa, 2010; Al-Jadid, 2013). Parents who are aware of the condition are generally happy when their child is sent to the resource room for extra support, in contrast to parents who lack the awareness of SpLD. Such parents do not consider their children as having a disability hence they should not be taken to the resource room. Such

parents generally consider their children as stubborn and unwilling to study (Al-Khateeb, 2001; Al-Qaryouti, 2009; Al-Mousa, 2010). Hence the need to create awareness by explaining to them what SpLD is and the benefits the child stands to gain by the support given (Al-Qaryouti, 2009; Aldabas, 2015).

HMIE (2008) declares that parents of children with dyslexia claim that inadequate support leads to significant social, emotional and behavioural difficulties in their children. Self-esteem can affect children who face barriers to academic learning, as well as children whose academic skills are age-appropriate but whose social skills are underdeveloped. The lack of knowledge and understanding of disabilities amongst adults in society can affect the individual within the home, school and the workplace. This may give an indication that children's lack of awareness and understanding of an individual's disability can be detrimental to that individual's health and wellbeing.

3.10 Conclusion

Thus, based on the literature review in this chapter, there is limited implementation of provisions for students with SpLD in KSA in terms of inclusion and exclusion as well as awareness. The literature review at this stage shows the need to improve the educational provisions for students with SpLD by involving the MoE, schools and teachers as well as parents of students with SpLD in KSA. In the next chapter, I critically discuss the methodology and methods used for this study.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I present the methodology applied in conducting the research. Section 4.1 begins with a justification of the philosophical stance informing my methodology. In section 4.2 I explain the research design for the study, and the rationale. That section also includes clarification of my role as a researcher during data collection as well as justification of the selection of the participants and the case studies. This is followed by an explanation of the strategies and measures taken to adhere to ethical issues in social research in section 4.3. Methods of data collection and data analysis are presented in section 4.5 and 4.6. Finally, the chapter concludes by providing an overview of the chapters to follow.

4.1.1 Philosophical position informing the methodology

Since no piece of research, or researcher or context can be similar to any other, there are different factors which contribute to how knowledge is interpreted. As a result, Pring (2004: 90) asserts that “dominant ways of thinking about social phenomena have been defined through distinct theoretical positions” which according to him are known by a range of ‘bewildering’ titles such as positivism, functionalism, interpretative theory, phenomenology, ethnomethodology, ethnography, constructivism, postmodernism, and so on. Pring (2004) further suggests that “without the explicit formulation of the philosophical background – with implications for verification, explanation, knowledge of reality – researchers may remain innocently unaware of the deeper meaning and commitments of what

they say or of how they conduct their research” (p.90). In this section I justify the choice of constructivist approach as the philosophical position informing my methodology in finding answers to the research questions.

4.1.2 Constructivist approach

While formulating the philosophical approach to my study, I revisited the research question: *Given the idiosyncratic definition and discussion of specific learning difficulties (SpLD) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, how are strategies for identification and provision framed in the context of actual classrooms?* Bryman and Bell (2011) have distinguished between two main ontological positions, these are objectivism and constructivism. As stated in the introduction to this chapter, the constructivist approach was adopted for this study. I adopted a constructivist approach based on my belief that people have an active role in constructing social reality and social structures. Walsham (1993: 5) defines constructive/interpretive as:

Methods of research start from the position that our knowledge of reality, including the domain of human action, is a social construction by human actors and that this applies equally to researchers. Thus there is no objective reality which can be discovered by researchers and replicated by others, in contrast to the assumptions of positivist science.

According to Charmaz (2006), the constructivism perspective addresses how realities are made. The perspective assumes that people, including researchers, construct the realities in which they participate. Charmaz (2006) further states that constructivist researchers enter the phenomenon being investigated to gain multiple views of it by collecting data from different sources and then seek to interpret it, a strategy referred to as triangulation (Creswell, 2009).

Pring (2004) maintains that to understand other people requires understanding the interpretations which they give of what they are doing, knowing their intentions and motives and knowing how they understood or interpret the situation. On that premise, in examining the provision for children with SpLD in one city in KSA, it was important that I examine different perspectives including the experiences of children with SpLD, and those of their parents, educators and managers in schools, and also of specialists, advisers and planners in the education system.

As an interpretivist researcher, I sought to understand the perceptions and different interpretations of participants in one city in KSA on educational provision for students with SpLD, and how they understood SpLD as well as how they identified and taught students with SpLD. In using this approach, I recognized that participants may have different views or definitions of these concepts as they seek to make sense of or interpret the phenomenon. For that reason I decided to use Frith's (1995) framework for understanding dyslexia together with the constructivist approach. Frith's framework was used to frame dyslexia within a conceptual framework while the constructivism approach helped me construct and interpret the different views of the participants.

This approach suits this exploratory study because it allows different meanings to contribute to the overall understanding of the study (Lincoln and Guba, 1990: 53). Creswell (2007: 24) maintains that this approach enables the researcher "to look for the complexity of views, rather than narrow the meanings into a few categories or ideas".

It was expected, therefore, that responses to interview questions would likely be mixed, with a range of opinions based on factors related to individual participants and to my experience. A constructivist approach aims to capture the rather disorderly phenomena that exist in the world and let the people speak for themselves in their own words as much as possible. I too have my own perspective, and this is declared openly and used to interpret the meanings, which others convey about the world as they experience it.

Since the constructivist approach focuses on how participants interpret their worldview, inconsistencies and contradictions which arise out of such an approach do not render it invalid; but may be useful as indicators of areas of particular interest, or starting points for further investigations. Instead of assuming that there is one single reality within which phenomena occur according to fixed rules, as in a positivist view of the world, the constructivist approach assumes that there are multiple voices, and multiple realities (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006). This means that the job of the researcher is to work together with other people to construct a multifaceted view of the phenomena studied, which allows reality to be seen through the lenses of different participants' views.

However, precautions are required to overcome the risk of bias and subjectivity in largely qualitative forms of enquiry. These include data triangulation (through gathering multiple view points) and cross-referencing cases within the sample together with other precautions.

Pring (2004) maintains that different approaches are used to answer different questions especially where that which is being researched is normally a complex

phenomenon, for example, the educational practice involving the provision for students with SpLD. In seeking answers to the research question, data triangulation was deemed necessary in which I collected data using interviews and observations, and from documents. Pring (2004) argues that researchers must be thorough in their search for the truth; hence using different methods of data collection enhances the trustworthiness of the study and ensures the rigour of the findings (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

According to Usher (1996), interpreters must recognize their situations and must highlight their meanings, suspend their subjectivity, and assume the attitude of disinterested observers. In contrast, it is argued that researchers cannot escape from their 'pre-understandings' even temporarily. Far from being closed prejudices or biases, their pre-understandings, make them more open-minded as they are put at risk, tested and modified through the encounter with what they are trying to understand (Chen, 2012). Therefore, researchers should use them as the essential starting point for acquiring knowledge rather than bracketing them.

Guba (1990) added that knowledge is a human construction, which is never certifiable as ultimately true, but problematic and ever changing. If there are always many interpretations that can be made in an enquiry, and if there is no way by which the ultimate truth or falsity of these interpretations can be determined, the researcher should take the position of a relativist, where relativism is the key to openness and the continuing search is generating one or a few constructions on which there is substantial consensus.

As a constructivist researcher I used pre-understandings as the starting point for acquiring knowledge. Gummesson (2000: 57) cited in Ryan (2011) states that the concept of pre-understanding refers to ‘people’s insights into a specific problem and social environment before they start’. Ryan (2011) argues that researchers must consider pre-understanding as a cognitive factor that can limit vision yet on the other hand can be a ‘value-added’ feature. To support this argument, he further argues that if for example a researcher with a teaching experience were to walk into a classroom his/her pre-understanding would be influential, useful and inform their experience and knowledge of that environment.

Toom (2006: 8) in Ryan (2011: 222) adds that “a teacher’s or ‘researcher’s common sense, pre-understandings, assumptions, and existing scientific knowledge strongly influence their interpretations, before they have even realised the pure nature of the phenomenon, if they have not explicated them clearly”. As a researcher, I was open-minded whilst conducting the study in the sense that those pre-understandings were tested and modified throughout the study. Thus, I attempted to recognize my pre-understandings and sought to ensure that the research was conducted in such a way to avoid those pre-understandings becoming a determinant of the research findings (Thomas, 2009).

One implication of a constructivist epistemology is that details of individual experience are very important, such that researchers are far more likely to use qualitative rather than quantitative methods (Chwalisz, Wiersma and Stark-Wroblewski, 1996; Silverman, 2006). Just as I stated earlier, usually a range of different methods is required in order to provide a rich and deep set of data to be

interpreted which in this study included interviews, observations, and document analysis (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006). Bogdan and Biklen (1998) argue that the approach is ideal for educational research because of the potential which it offers to transform practices from the inside, taking account of all those who have an interest in making it better, and to include a range of critical perspectives including Marxist, Feminist and Postmodern theories, for example. The resulting data can then be subjected to analysis through different interpretive lenses, which makes it ideal for exploratory work (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998).

4.2 Research Design

My choice of qualitative research approach was influenced by (Patton, 2015) who argued that qualitative methods enable the researcher to study selected cases or events in depth and in detail. According to Bryman (2004), qualitative research seeks to describe and analyse the culture and behaviour of humans from their point of view. In this section I present the justification for adopting qualitative research design. Therefore, I justify the choice of ethnographic approach in data collection and the advantages of adopting a case study design. I further discuss the rationale for choosing the case study design, the limitation of case study design and the sampling strategy, including the selection of the participants. I then explain the process for conducting the pilot study before finally clarifying my role and positionality in the field.

4.2.1 Ethnographic approach

The research design was based on the principles of ethnography. According to Toohey (2008: 177), ethnography originates in the discipline of anthropology and

“is aimed at describing and understanding the cultural practices and perspectives of groups of people.” Brewer (2000) avoids the rather difficult concept of ‘culture’ which has many different connotations, and offers a much longer definition of ethnography as:

The study of people in naturally occurring settings or ‘fields’ by means of methods which capture their social meanings and ordinary activities, involving the researcher participating directly in the setting, if not also the activities, in order to collect data in a systematic manner but without meaning being imposed on them externally (p.10).

This definition highlighted the importance of the context in which people live and work, and the dynamic way in which they interact with each other. Ethnography assumes that local meanings vary from place to place and stands in stark contrast to the approaches taken in the natural sciences where there is assumed to be a fundamental uniformity in the physical universe (Erickson, 2011). According to Denscombe (2002) ethnography is mainly descriptive. The ultimate goal of using the ethnographic approach was to understand the current practice by conducting in-depth research to be able to contribute towards professional practice in meeting educational needs of students with SpLD in one city in KSA by making recommendations for improvement.

Ethnographic approach was deemed suitable in this study for better understanding of the case studies. Hammersley (2006) states that “the task [of ethnographers] is to document the culture, the perspectives, and practices of the people in these settings. The aim is to ‘get inside’ the way each group of people sees the world”. Some of the features of ethnography identified by Hammersley and Atkinson (2007:3) that were applied in this study included: (1) the participants’ actions and accounts were

studied in everyday contexts, such that the research took place ‘in the field’ in which I was a participant observer; (2) the data was relatively unstructured from a range of sources, including participant observation, informal conversations as well as documentary evidence; (3) I focused on a few cases (two schools) to facilitate in-depth study; (4) as an interpretivist researcher, the analysis of data involved interpretation of the meanings, functions, and consequences of human actions and institutional practices, and how these were implicated in the local contexts. Using ethnographic approaches, I was able to follow up the participants’ thinking and feelings through informal conversations as a participant observer.

Pertaining to language, ethnography is the most important research design and acts as a basis for the conceptualizations relating to research that examines occurrences comparative to ‘context’ (Blommaert and Jie, 2010). In this study, I examined the issues related to values, perceptions, strategies, and standards by examining the learning and teaching experience of respondents in language classes focusing on the support given to students with SpLD in one city in KSA. I then provided the overview of the difficulties faced by students in reading and writing and how such difficulties were tackled by teachers in Saudi Arabian schools, and the facilities provided by such schools to students with SpLD. In addition to this, the perceptions of participants were also examined regarding SpLD through the case study approach.

Ethnographic methods overlap considerably with those of the case study, the main difference being one of scale. Case studies tend to have very clearly defined boundaries while ethnography is more open ended (Merriam, 2002; Yin, 2003).

This study is best described as an ethnographic case study, since it focused on two particular schools in one city in order to gain insights into that particular local context. The context, including its history and culture was important in understanding the causes and provision for students with SpLD as illustrated in Frith's framework in Figure 1.

4.2.2 Case study

Yin (2003:1) states that "case study is used in many situations to contribute to our knowledge of individual, group, organisational, social, political and related phenomena." Yin (2003) further states that case study is distinguished from other research methods in that it aims to include contextual conditions in which the research is taking place, hence, case study design is chosen with the belief that contextual conditions are predominantly substantial to the fundamental focus of the research. This study adopted case study designed (Yin, 2009) to investigate educational provision for students with SpLD and participants' understanding of SpLD in regular primary schools in one city in KSA, through collecting data from relevant staff members in schools and in the MoE as well as from the parents, and through observations of the process. As an interpretivist researcher, the study was descriptive resulting in qualitative data.

I decided to choose a flexible research design in order to attain a detailed description of the participants' experiences of the education provision of students with SpLD in primary schools in one city in KSA which according to Robson (2002) enhances the rigour of the research. I also intended to explore how participants, including teachers,

parents and specialists gave meaning to and expressed their understanding of the concept of SpLD and the educational provision and support for those students.

4.2.2.1 Multiple case study design

This research adopted Yin's (2009) multiple case study design to investigate educational provision for students with SpLD aged between 6 and 12 in two regular primary schools in one city in KSA. Data was collected through observations and through interviewing relevant staff members from the schools, including parents and officers from the MoE.

The suggestion by Yin (2009) that multiple case studies can increase the validity of a study influenced the choice of the research design. Although I had no intention to generalise my research findings, Cohen et al. (2007) argue that case studies provide insights into other similar cases, thereby making it possible to understand other similar cases. Nonetheless, I was seeking to understand the selected cases from KSA context rather than generalise the research findings. Hence the use of document analysis was necessary to provide a wider picture of the phenomenon I was investigating. Figure 3 below shows the framework for the multiple case study design (Yin, 2009).

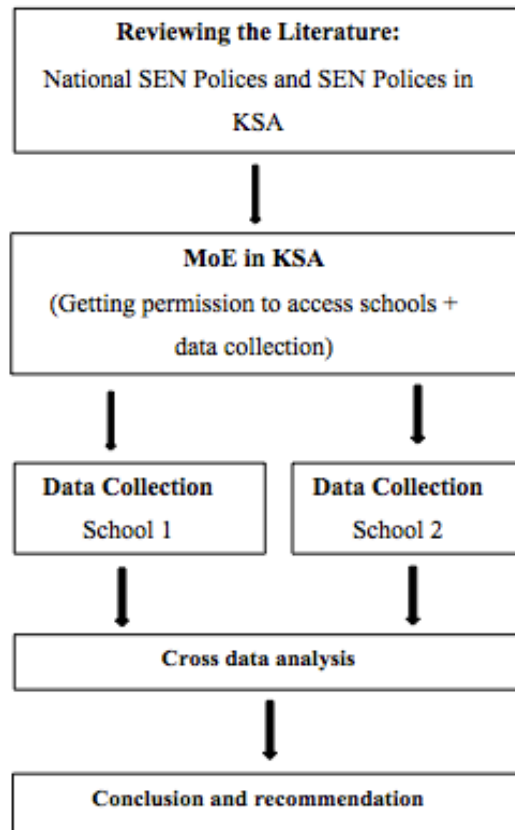


Figure 3: Design of the Case Study

4.2.3 Rationale for the multiple case study design

The rationale for using multiple case study design is that it allows a lot of detail to be collected that would not be easily obtained by other research designs (Yin, 2009). Firstly, using case study approach I was able to conduct an in-depth investigation by collecting data from participants in their contexts. I was, therefore, able to establish whether the policy on SNE in KSA corresponded to practice, especially in the provision for children with SpLD; thus, it was possible to understand the complex interrelationships between different factors and stakeholders. Moreover, Yin (2009) argues that case study design is very intensive and aims at studying everything, thereby giving a holistic view of the phenomena being studied.

Secondly, data collection was flexible such that I was able to use a variety of methods, including interviews, documents and observations in the same context (Robson, 2002). This range of distinct research methods can be seen as a strength since it provides a detailed description of the phenomenon being investigated. Finally, in collecting data from diverse sources and using different methods, triangulation automatically took place, thereby increasing the reliability of the study findings.

4.2.4 Limitation of using case study design

Using case study approach had several limitations. For example, I could not generalise the research findings (Yin, 2009); therefore, the conclusions drawn from the study best represented the particular phenomenon I was investigating. Nonetheless, my intention was not to generalise the research findings but rather to understand the phenomenon under investigation from the data gathered from the two schools.

Denscombe (2010) maintains that when reporting the case study findings, it is important for the researcher to include sufficient details about how the case compares with similar cases. Document analysis was, therefore, deemed necessary to provide background information on the educational provision for children with SpLD in KSA. Document analysis was followed by conducting a multiple case study for data triangulation to be able to confidently report on the phenomenon I was investigating. The second limitation with case studies cited by Yin (2009) is that they can be time-consuming, and that they may result in massive, unmanageable data. This was avoided by preparing an interview guide for the participants as shown in Appendix 9,

10 and 11. By using the interview guides, I was able to control the interview process, focus on the main issues and avoid digressing to irrelevant topics.

Finally, construct validity is considered a threat to case study design, which Yin (2009) attributes to the possibility of investigator prejudice. Yin (2009) notes that sometimes researchers find it difficult to define the construct they are investigating. In this study, for example, concepts like 'SpLD' and 'learning disability' did not have a straightforward definition. Cohen et al. (2007) suggest that in case there are constructs that have no clear definition, there is a need for researchers to confirm the concept with that given in related literature, as well as looking for various examples, to then stipulate how the construct would be used in the study.

For example, in Chapter three section 3.7 I have stated that the term 'learning disability' was used in the policy documents in KSA in order to classify students with reading, writing and spelling difficulties. However, in my study I preferred to use the term SpLD/dyslexia as I considered it broader, and it accommodates the reading, writing and spelling aspects.

4.2.5 Selection of case studies and the participants

I adopted non-probability sampling to be able to achieve the research objectives. According to Mertens (1998: 261) 'researchers working within the interpretivist/constructivist approach typically select their samples with a goal of identifying information-rich cases that will allow them to study a case in depth'. However, non-probability sampling is not without criticism; for example, Thomas (2009: 104) argues that when in 'the pursuit of the kind of person in whom the researcher is interested profess no representativeness'.

4.2.5.1 Purposive sampling

The two schools were selected through purposive sampling with the aim of getting answers to the research questions. Bryman (2012: 416) maintains that in purposive sampling, ‘the research questions should give an indication of what units need to be sampled’; likewise, May (2011: 100) argues that the sample should be ‘fit for purpose’, and that it should not only understand the research questions, but also possess the knowledge to answer them. By using this approach, I was able to identify schools and participants relevant to the aims and objectives of my study. Since I was primarily investigating the educational provision for students with SpLD, it was prudent to select participants who were involved in the education of children with SpLD. School 1 and School 2 were, therefore, selected after determining that they had children with SpLD after collecting preliminary data from documents and from the MoE. By using purposive sampling, I was assured that the participants had the knowledge and understanding, either through training or through experience working with students with SpLD in their schools, to be able to participate in the study.

Although this method of sampling is usually criticised for being selective and biased, Cohen et al. (2007), as well as May (2011), argue that a study is of no benefit for random sampling when the sample cannot provide the information being sought by the researcher. Cohen et al. (2007: 115) further maintain that the main concern in a study ‘is to acquire in-depth information from those who are in a position to give it’. Likewise, Denscombe (2010) argues that it is difficult to adhere to the principle and procedures of probability sampling when selecting people or events for small-scale research.

4.2.6 Sampling strategy

According to Robson (2002), determining sample size is one of the challenges novice researchers in qualitative research face. Robson (2002), Cohen et al. (2007) and Bryman (2012) agree that the decision about sample size is not a straightforward one as it depends on factors such as time, cost and the style of the research. For instance, cultural issues were one of the factors which greatly influenced my research design and in turn determined the sample size. For that reason, purposive sampling was adopted which resulted in the selection of the two schools for the multiple case study design. The rationale for selecting the two schools was that there was a high possibility of finding children with SpLD in primary schools that had support programmes for children with SpLD. The document analysis, which was done prior to the field data collection, revealed that there were limited primary schools offering educational provision for children with SpLD in KSA.

Sampling involved different levels, including the contexts and the participants (Bryman, 2012). Sampling of contexts was done by selecting two distinctive schools to exemplify educational settings for children with SpLD in KSA (Bryman, 2012). Sampling of the participants involved selecting participants depending on the role they were playing within the schools and in their involvement in supporting children with SpLD. As much as possible, I selected participants who had direct involvement in the education of children with SpLD; hence, purposive sampling was necessary in order to involve suitable participants who could provide answers to the research questions (May, 2011).

The diagram illustrates the distribution of the participants in the main study.

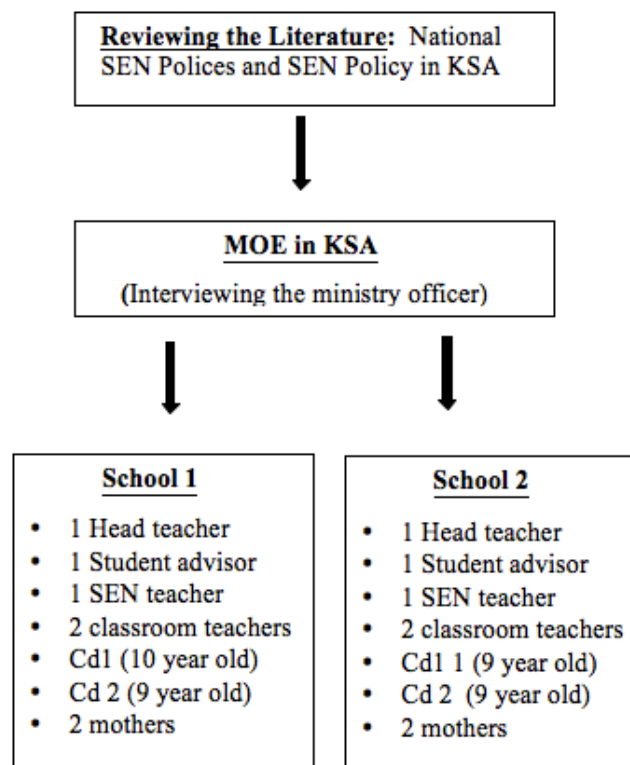


Figure 4: Distribution of Participants in The Main Study

The students who participated in this study were aged between nine and ten years, and they attended third and fourth grade classes. Due to cultural and religious implications which were explained in Chapter one, section 1.4, only the mothers of the selected students were included. School staff, including Classroom Teacher, SEN Support Teacher, Student Advisor, and the Head Teachers were also included. Participants from the Ministry of Education were also involved since they had direct influence on educational provision for learners with SpLD, either from a policy or a teacher training perspective. This purposive sample was essential in order to obtain information, which was most relevant to the research problem (Creswell, 2009).

4.2.6.1 Representativeness of the sample

As I have explained earlier, one of the common criticisms of case studies is that they provide little basis for generalisation (Yin, 2009). Critics of purposive sampling like Thomas (2009: 104) argue that since they lack the element of representativeness, they should therefore, not be referred to as ‘samples at all’. Likewise, Denscombe (2010) maintains that selection of case studies should not only be based on their relevance to the phenomenon being researched, but consideration of other factors should also be made, such as how the study findings would be used.

Although I indicated earlier that my intention was not to generalise the study findings but rather to understand the phenomenon under investigation with the aim of contributing to the educational provision for children with SpLD in KSA, some of the consideration when selecting the two distinct schools for case study included what Denscombe (2010) refers to as ‘typical instance’. The two primary schools that were involved in the study were typical of other public primary schools in KSA with similarities that merit such generalisations. Since the two schools had students with SpLD, there was a high probability that there were many similarities between them and other primary schools with students with SpLD in KSA. For example, such schools are all funded publicly; follow the regulations of the Ministry of Education in KSA. The legislative framework for finance, governance, and quality management was also the same for all public primary schools in KSA.

Similarly, Guba and Lincoln (1989) cited in Mertens (1989: 255) maintain that it is good practice to provide sufficient ‘thick description’ about the case studies so that

the reader can understand the contextual variables operating in that setting; once that is done, Stake (1994) in Mertens (1989: 255) argues that ‘the burden of generalisability then lies with the readers, who are assumed to be able to generalise subjectively from the case in question to their own personal experience.

4.2.7 Pilot study

The aim of the pilot study was to test and practice data gathering techniques. As suggested by Breakwell (2006:241), “properly conducted pilot work pays off.” For example, following the pilot study, I was able to identify questions, which needed to be amended, I was also able to polish up my questioning techniques and to build confidence. The pilot study took two weeks in on one primary school, where I interviewed one nine-year-old student, her mother, the Head Teacher, Classroom Teacher and the SEN Teacher. Figure 5 shows the participants who took part in my pilot study.

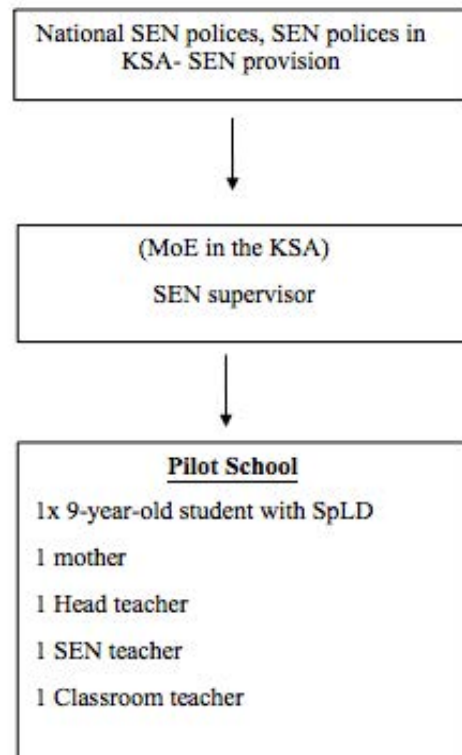


Figure 5: Distribution of Participants in The Pilot Study

This phase produced valuable insights, which informed my techniques for data collection during the main study. For instance, the SEN teacher commented that the questions were rather too long, and a bit confusing. That statement led me to adjust the interview questions by making them shorter and more specific. From the participants' responses, I also noted some questions were being repeated, I therefore grouped some of the questions or deleted the unnecessary ones. I also rearranged the questions so that they were systematically organised so that as much as possible one question could lead to the next. During the pilot study I also noted that the batteries for the digital audio recorder could not last long so I had to get spare batteries for the main study. The pilot study essentially gave me a taste of the complex range of skills needed in observing, interviewing and recording data.

4.2.8 My role and identity in the field

In this particular study, I collected data from the schools as a participant observer. Participant observation is valued in ethnographic research because of the extra insight that the researcher brings from prior knowledge of the field of study. In terms of data collection, Hammersley and Atkinson (2007: 3) state that:

Ethnography usually involves the researcher participating, overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, and/or asking questions through informal and formal interviews, collecting documents and artefacts – in fact, gathering whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the emerging focus of inquiry.

Ethnographic research views people as active participants rather than passive objects to be observed and this creates a relationship between researcher and participants (Erickson, 1984). Heath and Street (2008) considered that the relationship between respondents and researcher is that both of them are a part subject and a part object. According to Hammersley and Atkinson (2007: 87), it is necessary for an ethnographical researcher to develop “the construction of different ‘selves’” which means being especially aware of the roles that are being undertaken at any one time, and the demands of each separate context.

As a participant observer, I conducted most of the interviews, observations, and discussions informally in formal and informal contexts such as in classrooms during lessons, in the field during break time and the offices and staffrooms. Nonetheless, I adhered to ethical issues to ensure that anonymity and confidentiality was observed to as explained below.

4.3 Ethical considerations

In any social sciences research project, there is a clear imperative to adhere to ethical guidelines (Burton and Bartlett, 2009). For that reason, this study aimed to meet the ethical guidelines set by the University of Birmingham (UOB) and by the British Education Research Association (BERA, 2011). I also adhered to ethical guidelines for conducting research in KSA. Before conducting the fieldwork, it was important that I adhere to ethical guidelines both in the UK and in KSA where the research was conducted. Before embarking on data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the University of Birmingham ethics committee. A letter was also submitted to both the Ministry of Education and King Abdul-Aziz University (KAU) where I am employed in KSA in order to get permission to conduct research in specific primary schools in the country (See Appendix 1 and 2).

Once the approval was granted for field work, I visited the schools and other institutions where data was to be collected and sought permission from the head of the institution to be allowed to collect data. I therefore visited the participating schools including the school for the pilot study and issued them with the letter from the MoE stating that I was a bona fide student from my work and the UOB (Appendix 3). After obtaining permission to collect data from the schools, I made arrangements to visit the participating schools. Following the schools' rules in the Saudi context, one of the important considerations while making these visits was the need to pay attention to the dress code, including hairstyle, mode of dressing and the use of make-up as was required by the school administrators. It was also necessary to abide by all school rules relating to the staff conduct in order to fit in as closely as possible with the daily routine of the school (Delamont, 2002).

On my first visit to the schools, I had a briefing with the staff during which I introduced myself to them and explained to them the purpose of my study and how the study was relevant to their work. I informed the participants that participating in my study was voluntary. A written statement was signed by the participants as evidence for voluntary participation, rather than verbal permission. In that case, the ethical principle regarding 'informed consent' was adhered to (Burton and Bartlett, 2009). During the briefing I therefore explained to the participants verbally why their participation was necessary for success of the research and sent letters to them, an example can be found in Appendix 4. I also provided the participants with consent forms which they were required to read and sign as an indication that they voluntarily participated to the study (Appendix 6, 7, and 8). The participants were informed that they were free to withdraw from the study at any point before the final thesis was written. Since the study involved young students who had not reached the age to be able to sign informed consent form; thus, I asked for the consent of their parents (Appendix 5). The parents were informed through letters describing my study and their children's role in it and were asked to sign a consent form.

In order to guarantee the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants, pseudonyms were used to protect their identity (Burgess et al., 2006; Gersch and Dhomhnaill, 2004). The participants were assured that the information they provided would be dealt in confidentiality and that no one would know who provided which information. The participants were also informed that the data would be kept in line with the University of Birmingham's code of practice on a password secure computer for ten years, and then destroyed. Finally, participants

were informed that a report of the main findings of my study would be sent to the Ministry of Education, the primary schools, and KAU in KSA. The assurance made the participants more comfortable and willing to participate in the study.

After the briefing I asked the participants if they had any questions. One of the participants asked whether their names, and the school's name would be included in my final thesis; I reassured that neither the participant's names, nor the school's name would appear in the final thesis. I also reassured them even their colleagues would not be able to know who provided which information. The participants were satisfied with my explanation; however, I made it clear that they were free to raise any concerns at any point during the data collection period.

4.4 Trustworthiness of the study

Schwartz-Shea (2006) has mentioned that there are certain criteria which are mostly used by investigators for the development of trustworthiness related to the research project. Therefore, three major aspects were observed in this study, which were reflexivity, member checking and triangulation.

4.4.1 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is an extremely important factor within ethnographic and case study methods because it involves the reviewing of one's own thinking and feelings as well as the data being collected (Morrison, 2007: 43). This encourages "keen awareness of, and theorizing about, the role of the self in all phases of the research process" (Schwartz-Shea, 2006: 102).

In order to achieve reflexivity, I have presented the setting, the theoretical framework, my identity in the field, the process of data collection, and the data analysis process. I have also included the original interview extracts in appendices. More expanded versions of some of my field notes are included in the appendices as well.

Hasu (2005) demonstrates a need for reflecting on the interactive process of data collection; that is the relationship between researchers and the researched (Hasu, 2005: 32). For example, I had to be very careful of the way I interacted with the teachers, the parents, and the students with SpLD during data collection. Just as I have mentioned earlier, I had to observe issues such as the dress code in the learning institutions. Language was another issue relating to reflexivity since I had to use Arabic language during my interviews. I had to translate much of the data from Arabic into English. This was quite challenging because the interviews were initially transcribed in the Arabic language, which had to be translated in written form into English, a process which took a substantial amount of time (Holmes et al., 2013). Marshall and Rossman (2011) have argued that the process of translation involves construction of meaning and interpretation by the translator, a process which involves personal judgments about different research processes. I had to be careful to ensure that the translated data remained authentic and was an exact replica of the original data.

4.4.2 Member checking

‘Member check’ also called ‘respondent validation’ is a procedure whereby a researcher submits the data for checking by the people who were the source of the information (Bryman, 2004).

The fundamental issue for member checking is the extent to which the researcher’s understanding of what was going on in a social setting agrees with that of the participants. It focuses on possible differences between researchers’ and participants’ interpretations of the phenomenon (Schwartz-Shea, 2006: 89).

I tried to achieve the representation of the participants’ perspectives in the field by obtaining feedback from the participants. In addition, I checked the similarities between my interpretations and that of the students, teachers, and other participants. This helped me to clarify certain issues that shaped the findings of the study. I also verified the data with the SEN Supervisor responsible for the two schools. This process gave me her perspective on the feasibility of my suggestions.

Although member checking is not a trouble-free procedure, Lincoln and Guba (1985) maintain that the process is crucial for establishing the credibility of the research findings, and it also enables the researcher to understand the social world from the participants’ perspective. Lincoln and Guba (1985) however, argue that it is crucial to be sensitive when seeking member reassurance when verifying the data. For instance, a few participants did not agree with some of my interview records, which prompted me to revise them after seeking clarifications; others felt that the information that I had recorded was inadequate, so they provided more information. Such instances indicate the fragility of the data hence the need for member checking.

4.5 Methods of data collection and data analysis

4.5.1 Introduction

In this section I present the selected methods of data collection and data analysis in my study and explain the reasons behind their choice. In addition I explain how the research methods were implemented in order to answer my research question and achieve the purpose of this research project. For data triangulation, data was gathered from multiple sources to validate my research findings. As stated earlier, data was collected using ethnographic approaches including semi-structured interviews, observations and documents. Finally I discuss my concerns about the limitations and potential problems of this research in using the selected methods.

As stated above, this research study included multiple methods for triangulation purposes (see Figure 2 below for data sources), which is a characteristic of case studies. Interviews with head teachers, teachers, students with SpLD, and their mothers were conducted, along with lesson observation with field notes and audio recording. Documents such as students' progress records, IEPs, and exam papers were used in order to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of their work and the teachers' error correction and feedback methods. The diagram below shows a visual presentation of the multiple methods used in this study.

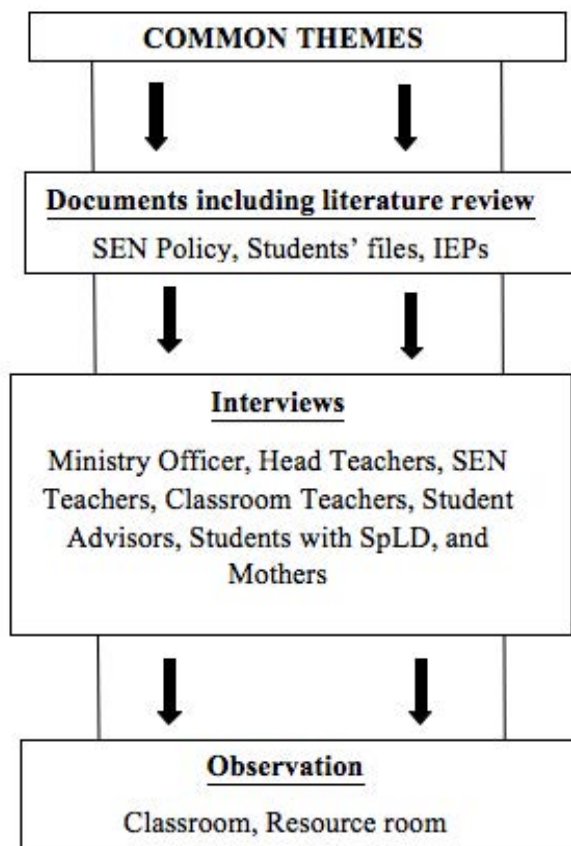


Figure 6: Multiple Sources/ Triangulation

Data collection was timetabled, therefore seven weeks were spent in each school, alternating one week at a time from one school to the other. I used a timetable for each student in each school in order to follow them, whether in their classrooms or in the resource rooms. I kept these timetables in separate files, one for School 1 and the other for School 2. I made sure to write the date, the week number, the name of the student, and the grade in each timetable examples can be found in Appendix 22.

A schedule of interviews was drawn up and efforts were made to complete that faithfully in order to cover all the ground that was initially scoped out in the research proposal (Blommaert, 2010). Visual data from student work and photographs of the classrooms (see Appendix 23) were collected because of the

valuable information they give about the context, this included observations while taking field notes.

4.5.2 Interviews

Interviews are widely used during research projects for the purpose of data collection. Ethnographic case study research design usually utilizes interview technique for gathering information from the participants. The interviews are beneficial for the investigators to get relevant and appropriate information from the participants in an effective way. Breakwell (2006) suggested different methods of interviewing ranging from interviewing single individuals to small groups but he stressed that it is essential to choose the best method for each situation.

Interviews were used as a primary method of data collection so that as an interpretivist researcher I could be able to probe the perceptions of the participants. Semi-structured interviews were therefore selected since they allowed natural conversational flow while still remaining focused on the research objectives (Blommaert, 2010). I however used a standardised interview schedule, the method allowed flexibility such that I could pursue and probe for novel and relevant information through additional questions (Arksy and Knight, 1999). Additionally, open-ended questions were used to encourage each participant for enhanced sharing of information. Different kinds of interviews were used to suit different participants or issues, since it was important to ask relevant questions depending on the role each participant played in the schools (Arksey and Knight, 1999). Audio recording was done during interviews to save time and to make sure I did not miss anything during the interviews; I however had to seek participants' consent to use the audio

recorder. Interviews were beneficial in this study since I was able to collect a wide range of data from education managers, teachers, students and parents (Drever, 1995).

Face to face semi-structured interviews have their own strengths related to the study. The first strength was that these interviews provided rich and highly illuminating material as compared with other methods of data collection. Secondly, using interviews, I was able to gather information that could not be obtained by other methods since I could probe for more details and sought clarification where needed hence providing detailed data from the participants (Thomas, 2011).

Nonetheless, data from multiple sources can result in huge data which would be hard to manage (Robson, 2002). This was avoided by preparing an interview schedule so that I could remain focused on the research questions during data collection. Some of the elements considered when preparing the interview schedule were: (1) formulating the interview questions in a way that they answered the research questions (2) ordering the questions to flow in the topic areas whilst being ready to alter the order of the questions during the actual interview (3) using language that was comprehensible and relevant to the participants. For instance the interviews were conducted in Arabic since that was the local language, the participant's native language and medium of instructions in schools as well and (4) avoiding asking leading questions.

I made sure that the interview schedule covered the following items: demographic details, general questions for semi-structured interviews which were mainly conversational, and questions regarding dyslexia and the educational provision for

SpLD students in primary schools in KSA. The items were influenced by the literature review (See Appendix 9, 10, 11 and 12). Following are the main items in the interview schedule:

- Knowledge and beliefs about dyslexia
- Schools' policy and provision
- Classroom practice
- Difficulties experienced by the students and teachers
- Future improvement

The literature review in Chapter two and three played a key role in generating the main items in my interview schedule. In Chapter two, section 2.4 I indicated that there are many misconceptions about children with dyslexia. Despite significant strides in understating the nature of dyslexia as a language-based reading disorder, dyslexia is 'often misunderstood' (Hudson et al., 2007:506). The confusion surrounding dyslexia has led several researchers to point out common misconceptions or confusion about the causes, incidence, and instructional implication of dyslexia (Hudson et al., 2007; Wadlington and Wadlington, 2005).

Furthermore, the literature review in Chapter three indicates that many parents and teachers struggle to understand the nature of the children difficulties. Lack of awareness about these disabilities among the teachers and parents, has often resulted in children with SpLD being labelled as 'idiots' or 'lazy'. The constant failure and criticism by both parents and teachers have adverse effects on these children's emotionally. They are more likely to develop low self-esteem and often find

schooling quite stressful as compared to their peers (Riddick, 1996; Riddick et al., 1999).

Following Hammersley and Atkinson's (2007) suggestion that in some studies, investigators can use simple approaches in data collection, in this study I utilized precise ways to collect data in an appropriate flow. General questions were narrowed down to more specific ones in order to prompt the interviewees to talk about specific issues. Probes were used for clarification and explanation of data during interviews (Drever, 1995). Nonetheless, caution was taken to avoid leading respondents by putting words in their mouths, probe questions as 'then what happens?', and 'can you give me an example?' As much as possible, the probe questions were similar for all the respondents where necessary.

Cohen et al. (2007) state that such interviews are known as funnel questions, which are helpful for investigators to collect specified data. Great attention was, however, paid when constructing the interview schedule. The process involved translating the research questions from English to Arabic and then augmenting them into interview questions so that I could achieve the research objectives. I then grouped the research questions into themes for easy analysis (Lofland, 2006).

Interviews are not without disadvantages, for example, they can be time consuming especially when they are conversational as in semi-structured and informal interviews (Cohen et al., 2007). For example Denscombe (2007) points out how participants respond differently depending on how they perceive the interviewer – the interviewer effect "In particular, the sex, the age, and the ethnic origins of the interviewer have a bearing on the amount of information people are willing to

divulge and their honesty about what they reveal” (p.184). Likewise Cohen et al. (2000) maintain that the interviewer is prone to bias and subjectivity, hence the need to take precautions such as triangulation and respondent validation as well as creating rapport with the participants including reflexive interviewing to guard against such threats to the study (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007).

4.5.1.1 Transcription and archiving

Transcription was an effective approach, which was used to work through interviews in order to identify relevant content (arguments, ideas, and perspectives). The advantage of making audio recordings of interviews was to reduce the risk of data misinterpretation. One of the advantages of this method was that audio recording did not provide a complete picture of the communication which took place during the course of an interview. One of the disadvantages of audio recording was that there could be some background noises during interviews, especially when the interview took place in room next to a classroom; nonetheless, I tried as much as possible to use rooms that were free from background noise. After every interview the data was transcribed within a one week and stored chronologically as per the standards of Data Protection Act (1998).

4.5.3 Observation and field notes

According to Robson (2002: 310), ‘saying is one thing; doing is another’– hence, observations provided an opportunity to determine whether indeed what the participants said they did was actually what they were doing in the real setting (Burton and Bartlett 2005). Data collected from observation was used to compliment the data obtained from interviews and from documents through

triangulation (Robson, 2002). Even so, observations have an advantage over other methods because they are direct, which makes them a valuable source of primary data. Robson (2002) maintains that an observer does not necessarily have to ask the participants about their views, feelings or attitudes, but just watches what they do and listens to what they say. According to Burton and Bartlett (2005), observations sometimes bring certain behaviours and practices to the attention of the researcher that may not be noticed through other methods.

The reason for collecting data through observations was to gain an opportunity to take note of the teaching practice relating to supporting students with SpLD while at the same time examining the teaching and learning environment in which these students were being taught. According to Robson (2002) observation is the most appropriate technique for getting at 'real life' in the real world, hence classroom observations suggested whether the MoE policies regarding the educational provision for students with SpLD translated into practice, complementing the data document analysis. Through observations, I was able to verify whether what was recorded in the policy documents was actually what was happening in the schools. For example, the education policy in KSA (2008: 29) suggests new development in the educational environment in order to achieve excellence in the education quality.

- Enhance education and learning environment and increase its educational effectiveness
- Bridge the technology educational environment gaps throughout provision of requirements in terms of schools environment,
- Implement information technology and integrate such technology in education.
- Varying education sources in the school classes.

Accordingly, the observations were conducted in two separate main locations, the classroom-learning environment and the resource rooms. The table below shows the observational focuses in this study.

Classroom	Resource room
1. The layout	The layout
People involved Who is in the setting? What are the roles of the people in the setting? Why are certain people in the setting? What are the characteristics of the people in the setting?	People involved Who is in the setting? What are the roles of the people in the setting? Why are certain people in the setting? What are the characteristics of the people in the setting?
2. Classroom activities	Resource room activities
3. Students engagement with each other	Students engagement with SEN teacher
4. Conversations and behaviour	Conversations and behaviour
5. Teaching methods/ ICT/strategies/ group activities	Teaching methods/ICT/ strategies /one-to- one/ small groups
6. Teacher-student interactions	Interaction between SEN teacher and students with SpLD
7. Teaching materials/ sources used	Teaching materials/ sources used
8. The students' difficulties in the classroom	The students' strengths and needs in the resource room
9. Exams, assessment and evaluation	Assessment and evaluation

Table 1: Observation Facts

Ethnographers face the challenge of 'being there' and being able to write about themselves and their position in the field (Morrison, 2007). Some of the potential limitations to observations include that of researcher bias – the influence of the researcher's assumptions and preconceptions (Robson, 2002). According to Bryman (2004) researchers can address the issue by use of reflexivity which means

researchers becoming aware of the effects of their “methods, values, biases, decisions, and mere presence in the very situations they investigate” (p.543). Following Hammersley and Atkinson’s (2007) typology, my role was somewhere between ‘complete participant’ and ‘complete observer’; I therefore conducted both participant and non-participant observations. During data collection I introduced myself as a researcher.

I was fully aware that my presence could affect the participants’ behaviour, especially teachers’ and students’, which Robson (2002) refers to as observer effect. For example, during the first two weeks, the teachers seemed uncomfortable with my presence and appeared over cautious. The first few classroom observations were uncomfortable and awkward for the teachers, students and myself. The students kept looking at me during the lessons and whispering to each other, which made the classroom teachers angry and kept shouting at them.

Initially some of the teachers did not trust me such that whenever I spoke to them, they were reluctant to offer information and were afraid that I might report what they said to the school administration or to officers in the MoE. It was not until the third week when I was gradually accepted by the school community. When they realised that I was there to do a research and not to spy on them, we then started to develop a deeper relationship with teachers and students. Classroom behaviour became more natural as teachers and students got used to my presence. Thus observations became easier; sometimes the students would approach me to ask open questions about my studies and offered information more freely.

4.5.2.1 Field notes

Creswell and Miller (2000) describe field notes as texts (words) that are recorded by the researcher during an observation in a qualitative study (p.224). Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) described the writing of field notes whilst still in the field as ideal for ethnographers. On the other hand, Denscombe (2010) argued that generally field notes need to be taken outside the field itself as taking notes disrupts the naturalness of the setting and discloses the researcher's role as observer (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007).

According to (Sanjek, 1990) most researchers take notes openly during ethnographic and formal interviews though some prefer not to write in front of participants but rely later on their memory. Bryman (2012) maintains that field notes should be written as soon as possible after leaving the field site since there is a likelihood of forgetting important details. However, I did not write field notes during the first week of my observations, since I wanted teachers and students to feel comfortable with my being there to minimize the 'observer effect', a situation which occurs when subjects alter their behaviour because an observer is present (Robson, 2002; Delamont, 2002).

Data collected from observations included classroom layouts and the contents of the table that students sat around, shorthand written notes, and notes scribbled as I interacted with the teachers and the students (Hammersly and Atkinson, 2007). Two different note books were used; one for each school so the data would not be mixed up. In each notebook, notes taken in classrooms were separated from notes taken in

the resource rooms and from other sources (Appendix 20, Resource Room Field Notes, Appendix 21, Classroom Field Notes)

Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) maintain that every period of observation should result in processed notes. One of the strengths related to ethnography was that the analysis was an integral part of research. I therefore produced two versions of my field notes. The first draft of the field notes was handwritten. The second version contained the important notes that concentrated on the cases, which primarily served my research. This draft was a word-processed version, which combined written up field notes, initial analytical comments, and further reflections.

4.5.4 Documents

According to Blommaert (2010), researchers must be aware that everything within the natural environment may have an impact on the existing learning issues. Therefore, documents may be included to provide a more complete depiction of the participants' behaviours. To augment data collected from observations and interviews, other data was generated from available documents, including the historical background/context and policies of the educational provision for students with SpLD in KSA. Policy documents were analysed to provide secondary data, hence helping in addressing the research question by giving breadth of data, and triangulating data generated from interviews, observations, and field notes. In addition, a collection of documents was used to gain further insight into the students' learning environment.

Some of the documents used were official documents such as policy documents, the student's medical history, individual educational plans (IEPs), the student's sample

worksheets, their class schedule, and notes taken while reviewing the student's cumulative education files. These documents are analysed in more details in section 4.7. The reason for collecting these documents was to examine the difficulties students were experiencing in writing and the teachers' correction methods (Marshall and Rossman, 2006; Delamont, 2002: 217).

All these were examined to identify possible connections to the themes developed from the research objectives and the research questions (Delamont, 2002; Marshall and Rossman, 2006).

4.6 Data analysis

Bogdan and Biklen (1998) define qualitative data analysis as “working with the data, organizing them, breaking them into manageable units, coding them, synthesizing them, and searching for patterns”. The aim of data analysis is to discover patterns, concepts, themes, and meanings. In case study research, Yin (2003) discusses the need for searching the data for “patterns”, which may explain or identify causal links in the database. In the process, the researcher concentrates on the whole data first, then attempts to take it apart and re-constructs it again more meaningfully.

According to Hammersley and Atkinson (2007), the first step in the process of analyzing ethnographic data involves careful reading of data in order to get familiar with it. I organized my data in a systematic way and made it easy to be traced back to its original context. I listened to the tapes several times then read and re-read the transcripts, then proceeded to write memos, comments, and summaries to become familiar with the data before starting formal analysis. I organized my data in three

phases, so that each phase led me to the next phase easily, resulting in detailed data analysis approach.

4.6.1 Data analysis process

The datasets that have been analyzed include: audio recordings and transcripts of the ethnographic interviews, observation field notes, and documents.

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), researchers generally have some ideas of what would feature in the study or may have some ideas of what to look for even if such ideas may change over time, hence the need to formulate the final conceptual framework to include all the themes that emerge from the data analysis.

As stated previously, this research is placed within the constructivist approach which assumes that the meaning of experiences and events are constructed by individuals, and therefore people construct the realities in which they participate (Charmaz, 2006).

From this stance, research aims to elicit and understand how research participants construct their individual and shared meanings around the phenomenon of interest. Also particular to constructivism is a similar construction of meaning by researchers that “their interpretation of the studied phenomenon is itself a construction” (Charmaz, 2006: 187).

The data I gathered from the participants were based on expectations and experience which I investigated against reality. The role of context was also important as this offered important information which gave me clues about the reality. This approach relies on ‘bottom up’ processing; I analysed various forms of

data such as texts, notes, photos and documents. I was looking for relationships and patterns to construct knowledge from the data. In addition, I used ‘top-down’ processing as I analysed the ‘big picture’ which is understanding dyslexia from a high level view, I used Frith’s framework as my theoretical framework which guided me to gain more understanding of the different views of SpLD from literature review and enabled me to link the literature review with the data gathered from the two primary schools involved in this study.

Themes and subthemes were essentially generated from the recurring ideas in the data set (Bryman and Bell, 2011). The thematic analysis enabled me to associate and analyse the frequency of themes from the data set.

There are several reasons for adopting such an approach. Research is often bounded by constraints of time and resources, and analysis has to be brought to a close when specific questions have been answered; this approach is suited to asking specific questions with limited timescales, especially with a single researcher conducting a doctoral research. Another reason is that although this analysis is mainly inductive, it allows for the inclusion of a priori as well as emergent concepts in coding (Bryman and Bell, 2011; Clarke and Braun, 2013). I had a priori concepts, from existing literature and document analysis (biological, cognitive, and behavioural), which I wished to use as codes in addition to codes developed from other emergent themes such as inclusive education and awareness of SpLD.

The process of my data analysis is explained in five stages below

4.6.1.1 Familiarisation

The tape-recorded interviews were transcribed into text as soon as possible after every interview. The transcriptions were written in a word file. When I was writing up field notes, transcribing recorded interviews, or filing documents that I gathered from the site, I jotted down any preliminary words or phrases for codes on the notes, transcripts, and documents. The transcripts were read several times to identify new themes and categories. This process was used to develop categories, which were then conceptualized into broad themes

The data have been organized in a systematic way and any unit of text can be traced back to its original context. I have listened to tapes; read and re-read the data, and made memos and summaries to get familiar with the data before starting formal analysis.

4.6.1.2 Identification of a thematic framework

The identification of a thematic framework was the initial coding framework, which developed from the interview questions and the initial themes (biological, cognitive and behavioral) and from emerging issues during the data familiarisation stage; an example of one of the environmental sub-themes is discussed in Figure 6 below. This thematic framework was developed and refined during subsequent stages through re-coding to develop better-defined categories. The theme of knowledge and beliefs about dyslexia was drawn from the literature review and the data, which indicated different perspectives for understanding dyslexia: biological, cognitive and behavioural. The theme of policy and provision was drawn from both the literature and the field data. The theme of teachers' and parents' awareness was

drawn from the literature and the interview data generated by mothers and classroom teachers. The theme of students' and teachers' difficulties was also drawn from the literature review and the field data.

I chose Frith's model for the analysis of my data in order to investigate the perspectives of the different groups of participants and the relationship between them. I have discussed this theoretical framework in an earlier chapter, in which I explain that the model shows dyslexia to be considered in terms of the brain or biology anomalies, and the contribution of genetics; in terms of cognition, that is, the thinking process; and in terms of behaviour, that is, as a result of the difficulties they experience in acquiring skills in reading, writing and spelling. See Figure 7 for more explanation.

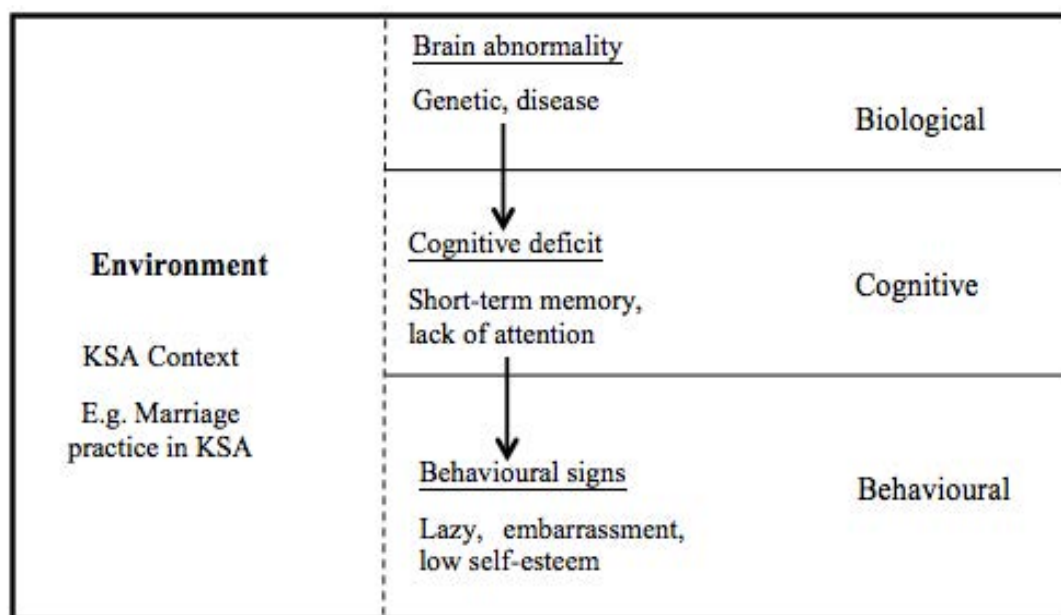


Figure 7: An Example of One of The Sub-Themes Analysis

4.6.1.3 Indexing

Having identified the thematic framework for the study, the process began of applying that framework to the data, using codes to identify specific pieces of data corresponding to the themes. I searched the data for material that could be coded under this framework while concurrently searching for emergent concepts. The preliminary codes such as knowledge and beliefs about SpLD, schools' policy and provision and classroom practice, used at this stage, were modified later but served to begin the process of categorizing and analysing.

4.6.1.4 Charting

This process began by using headings from interview questions to create tables of my data so that I could read across the dataset. These tables could be thematic for each theme across all respondents (cases) or by case for each respondent across all themes. Table 3 below shows an example of how data can be tracked.

1	Q	What is your role in the school?
2	HT S1	I am the head of the school my duties are ensure smooth running of the school. I ensure that the curriculum is implemented as required by the MoE. I act as the link between the teachers, parents and the MoE. I ensure that student's needs are met as required by the MoE.
3	SEN Tr S1	My role is to assess the children with SpLD after they are identified by their classroom teachers. I am responsible for preparing their files and designing their IEPs, and teaching them. I am also responsible for creating awareness to the parents about how to support their children at home.
4	StA S1	I am the student advisor in this school. My role is to look after the wellbeing of students with disability in the school by working closely with the SEN teacher, the teachers and the parents. I make follow-ups regarding students medical, financial issues and other problems.
5	Tr1 S1	I am a classroom teacher, I teach the third grade Arabic literacy and Islamic studies.

6	Tr2 S1	I am a mathematics teacher, I teach the fourth and the fifth grades.
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Table 2: An Example of The Data From School 1

4.6.1.5 Mapping and interpretation

After the charting process, the analysis went further, searching for patterns, associations, concepts, and explanations in my data, aided by visual displays and plots. This stage aimed at identifying points of consensus and contradiction between different participants (HT, SEN Tr, Tr...etc.) with regard to their views on SpLD. In this final stage of analysis, I identified the findings from the field data, which was compared with findings from documents analysis, and findings from the literature review.

4.7 Document analysis

As I explained in section 4.5.4 document analysis has been used as a secondary source to analyse policy documents. It helped to address the research question by giving breadth of data and triangulating data generated from interviews and observations. I collected government policy documents; guidelines and reports on educational provision for students with SpLD in KSA.

As I analysed the interview scripts and field notes observations, while reading though these documents I highlighted any preliminary words or phrases for codes on the documents. The data generated from available documents have been grouped into three categories: the historical background/context, policies of SpLD and provision in KSA. The categories were then conceptualized into broad themes but also in each

theme I included sub-themes such as inclusive education was grouped as a sub-theme under the broad theme policies of SpLD. An example of the policy documents analysis is explained below.

Domain	Support and ethos	Policies
Support for student	Supporting the development of the student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing an inclusive and caring culture, supporting the programmes • Facilitating the students with different abilities to enhance their potential
	Climate of the school in which the student is studying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training the tutors to be the ambassadors of the students • Organizing activities to train the leaders and promote the inclusive culture

Table 3: An example of The Documents Analysis Process (Policy of SpLD: Inclusive Education)

4.8 Limitations of using computer software for analyzing qualitative data

Qualitative data, especially in ethnographic research, is subject to strong debates about how much the process of analysis can be systemized (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007: 43). I had intended to use NVIVO in order to analyze the interviews and observations data but, it was difficult since all of the interviews were conducted in Arabic, hence translations might not give the accurate meaning of the original data (Holmes et al., 2013: 292). In order to overcome these difficulties in translating data from Arabic to English, all the data were coded and analyzed

manually in Arabic. Holmes et al., (2013) state that researchers sometimes use a range of languages in order to gather their data, and yet processes of working among these languages in data generation, analysis and writing up are not always made clear. I therefore analyzed my data manually in my own language as well as using a Microsoft word processor. Microsoft word includes features such as adding comments in the margin, highlighting text, findings, and replacing words or phrases. These features were very helpful in analyzing data manually. Only then did I translate the data I used in my thesis to be presented for my readers/examiners. In order to build trust and overcome the limitation of losing the meaning of the data, I had to work with an Arabic/ English translator.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the methodology and the methods that were used for the data collection and analysis of this study. Implementing some of the methods developed certain difficulties and limitations for the study findings. First, the research tools and materials had to be prepared in English then translated into Arabic. The tools were then administered in Arabic and afterwards translated back into English to be presented in the thesis. It has also explained the constructivist epistemology and ethnographical design approaches that were used in the case study. The rationale for pilot and main studies were summarized, and issues of researcher role, including ethical considerations and the trustworthiness of the data were also considered.

Document analysis helped me to examine the historical context, policies and strategies, strengths and weaknesses of the educational provision provided for

students with SpLD in KSA. Frith's framework for understanding dyslexia was used for thematic analysis; the data was analyzed manually through coding process. Firth's theoretical framework was also used to interpret the data. Some of the limitations of using computer software applications for analyzing the data have also been highlighted.

In conclusion, the developed research designs, methodological manifestations, and data collection procedures were preferred due to their suitability in addressing the research question. Clearly, no educational research is perfect, as each has its strength and limitations; however, an appropriate level of effort has been utilized for making this research as valid and reliable as possible. In the next chapter I present the research findings from interviews, documents, and observations.

5 DATA PRESENTATION

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter data is presented to respond to the issue of “Current provisions for children with SpLD in two primary schools in one city in KSA”. The chapter focuses on the educational provision for students with SpLD in two primary schools offered support programmes for those children in one city in KSA. I have mainly paid attention to the attitudes, knowledge, and perspectives of teachers, students, and parents regarding the educational provision for children with SpLD. While in Chapter three I highlighted the educational provision in KSA from a general perspective based on policy documents review from the literature in KSA and internationally. In this chapter I have focused on policy documents regarding the implementation of the educational provision for children with SpLD in two primary schools and then crossed checked the data with interviews from teachers, parents and students with SpLD themselves to determine whether policy translated to practice. Data from observations and field notes is also presented in this chapter for triangulation, to determine whether indeed what the participants said they did was actually what they were doing on the ground.

Data from multiple sources, including interviews, observations and policy documents were coded as explained in Chapter four, which resulted into sub-themes which emerged across the data set. The themes are discussed in four section as follows: the first section focuses on the policy on the educational provision for children with SpLD in KSA; the second section is on awareness of SpLD; section

three is about identification of children with SpLD; in section four I focused on about how the educational needs of children with SpLD were met in the regular schools in this study. Attention was paid to the resources rooms; in the last section I focus on factors which led to exclusion of children with SpLD, and finally there is the conclusion.

5.2 Educational provision for students with SpLD

Some regular schools in KSA offer support programmes for students with SpLD and prepare them for the appropriate skills, which would help the students to compete with the other children and understand their potential in education and the social life. In this section I present the data from the two schools studied.

5.2.1 Demographic data for the schools

Information about the schools was obtained from the documents within the school and from documents from the Ministry of Education. However, since every institution has their own culture and systems for how they operate, interviews were selected as the primary tools for data collection in the field in order to gather relevant information from each specific school.

Data was collected from nine participants from each school, including the Head Teacher, SEN teacher, Student advisor, two teachers, two parents and two students making a total of 9 from each school. Observation of the teachers and the students was also done in each of the schools.

Responses from the participants are identified by the codes as shown in the table below.

Participants	Codes for School 1	Code for School 2
Head Teacher	HT S1	HT S2
SEN Teacher	SEN Tr S1	SEN Tr S2
Student advisor	StA S1	StA S2
Classroom teacher 1	Tr1 S1	Tr1 S2
Classroom teacher 2	Tr2 S1	Tr2 S2
Child 1	Cd1 S1	Cd1 S2
Child 2	Cd2 S1	Cd2 S2
Parent 1	Pt1 S1	Pt1 S2
Parent 2	Pt2 S1	Pt2 S2
SEN Supervisor	Supervisor	

Table 4: The Participants' Codes Used in The Study

Primary schools in KSA constitute of lower and upper grades. Grades 1-3 are the lower grades while the upper Grades are 4-6. The age range for children in primary school is 6-12 years. According to the MoE guidelines, children learn five days a week from Sunday to Thursday, the school day begins at 7:15 in the morning although children are expected to arrive at school at 7 am. The school day ends at 12:30 for lower grades and 1:00 pm for upper grades; each lesson is 45 minutes for all classes. The schools follow the same curriculum designed by the MoE. The table below shows the population of the two schools including the teachers and the students and those included in the SpLD programmes.

	School 1	School 2
Teachers	40	38
Students	700	706
Students with SpLD admitted in the programme	18	18
Students with SpLD in the waiting list	70	110

Table 5: Population Per School

Just as I stated in section 4.2.5, all the participants, including the parents, teachers and students were female since I had to adhere to the cultural and religious beliefs of the participants. While on one hand it can be argued that only involving female participants may not provide credible data, on the other hand it is also important to note that the majority of primary school teachers not only in KSA but in most countries are female, which can lead to the conclusion that whether female or male, the data collected for the study enhanced the validity of the data.

In the next section I present data on the educational provision for children with SpLD. In that section I focus on the policy on SpLD programmes and how they were implemented in the primary schools.

5.2.2 Policy on educational provision for students with SpLD

The review of the educational provision for students with SpLD in primary schools in KSA was discussed in Chapter three. The literature review reflected different perspectives and the current educational provision in KSA. In Chapter three I stated that in the recent years the Saudi government started focusing on improving the

education of children with disabilities. As a result, the primary schools have made efforts to meet the educational needs of children with SpLD by preparing appropriate programmes which would help them to achieve their full potential in education and in their social life. This chapter contributes to the detailed analysis by discussing the data collected from the participants' narratives, observations and document analysis. The reason for presenting data from interviews and observations as stated earlier was to compare data from multiple sources to determine whether policy translated into practice.

The MoE in KSA ensures that all residents have access to at least the basic education so that they can understand the requirements of external environments and are able to stand out as a civilized society. A scrutiny of the policy documents indicated that the policy on the educational provision is divided into two sub-categories. The first one is student support, which was further subdivided into two (a) supporting the development of students, and (b) school climate. The second sub-category is partnership, which is also subdivided into (a) cooperation between home and school and (b) association with the external organization (Al-Mousa et al., 2008: 31). The subdivisions on educational policies are as shown in the table below:

Domain	Support and ethos	Policies
Support for student	Supporting the development of the student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing an inclusive and caring culture, supporting the programmes • Facilitating the students with different abilities to enhance their potential • Organizing activities to increase awareness and respect the differences • Identifying different possibilities for the students with SEN
	Climate of the school in which the student is studying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training the tutors to be the ambassadors of the students • Organizing activities to train the leaders and promote the inclusive culture
Partnership	Cooperation between home and school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having regular meetings with the parents of special children and organizing the voluntary activities to promote the development of the children
	Association with the external organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing positive relationships with the external organization to seek professional support and resource the community in a positive way.

Table 6: Educational Policy Subdivisions

To ascertain whether there was a SEN policy in the MoE and how the SEN policies were implemented in schools, I interviewed the local SEN supervisor from the MoE and teachers in the two schools that were involved in the study, both SEN teachers and classroom teachers. The SEN Supervisor confirmed that SEN policy guidelines were prepared by a group of SEN teachers and made available to all schools:

Yes there is a policy but we deal according to organizational regulations. It is for SEN in general not only for SpLD. We have issued a guidebook for SEN teachers. SEN teachers developed the guidebook; after several revisions the guidebook was accepted and then distributed to all SEN teachers in all schools that offer a SpLD programme. I make sure to send a complete pack to every SEN teacher. I also visit them in order to check that the SEN teacher has a full copy of the latest and an updated copy of the guidebook and check how the programme is going on (SEN Supervisor, Appendix 17: 450).

The above policy shows a clear statement for inclusive education of student with SEN including students with SpLD in KSA. The SEN Supervisor emphasized that the current SEN policy was general and there is a need to set another policy for SpLD. When considering the above policies, two issues emerged regarding their implementation. For example, there was no defined process to create awareness among the teachers about these policies; this was manifest in the responses obtained from the classroom teachers who were interviewed, who had contradicting information on whether or not the policy documents were circulated among the schools for the teachers to familiarize themselves with the policies. The two SEN teachers who were interviewed maintained that the policy documents were usually sent to all schools and that the teachers were required to sign for them as evidence that they had received them. This was acknowledged by some teachers who said that they received the documents, but although they were made to sign for them, some of the teachers said that they never read the contents in them see Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 from School 2, Appendix 14: 265-266.

In contrast, there were teachers who maintained that the policy documents were never sent to the schools, neither were they made to sign such documents (Student Advisor, School 1, Appendix 13: 111).

From the data analysis, several discrepancies were noted between the participants, depending on their roles and their qualifications. For instance, SEN teachers seemed to be more aware of the SEN policies than their counterparts. It is worth noting that the SEN teachers in this study had a bachelor degree in special needs, with experience of 5 – 7 years. On the other hand, teachers in regular classrooms who had no SEN training were either reluctant to discuss issues regarding SEN policy or they were not aware of them. Whereas SEN teachers appeared happy to discuss policy issues regarding educational provision for children with SEN, their counterparts who had no SEN training were not very keen. This was evident in that teachers in the regular classroom either stated that they had not seen the SEN policies or they were not sure whether they had signed the policy documents or not (Appendix 13: 112-113).

The contradicting views from teachers led to further questions on whether or not some of the educational policies were implemented as they ought to be. Despite the MoE making efforts to improve the education of children with disability in general as noted in the policy documents, the situation seemed different on the ground, since not all had the knowledge regarding SEN policy. The data collected from the teachers indicated the need to create awareness among all teachers regarding implementation of educational provision for children with SpLD.

The responses from some of the participants that they just signed some document without reading the contents indicated that there was no follow up of whether the policies were implemented; hence, the teachers were not keen to discuss them, especially those in the regular classrooms and without SEN training. The lack of awareness of policy and practice about SpLD provisions could be the reason for the

negative attitude which can consequently affect how teachers deal with students with SpLD in their schools.

The role played by the teachers who were interviewed seemed to influence their responses to interview questions, leading to notable contradictions even where the participants were in the same school. For example the teachers disagreed that they were provided with the policy guidelines for dealing with students who have difficulties in reading, writing, and in mathematics. Teachers who were SEN trained seemed to be the only ones who had the knowledge of the SEN policy document, while the classroom teachers seemed disinterested. For instance, while some were reluctant to comment on the SEN policy, others denied ever having seen such policies to help them in supporting children with SpLD. But on the contrary, SEN teachers acknowledged having such documents (SEN Teacher, School 1, Appendix 13: 110).

The data collected from the two schools suggested that although the schools were provided with the SEN policies, teachers hardly made use of them. Data gathered from the participants indicated that although there was SEN policy made available to the teachers, it either favoured boys or it was not specific on how it would be implemented. For example, according to the SEN Supervisor, most of the policies for primary education had never been updated since 2007 and most of them were copied from the boys' circulars (SEN Supervisor, Appendix 17: 450).

5.2.3 Provisions in place within the schools

In this section I have dealt with the responses to the question regarding the programmes the schools had for children with SpLD and their perceptions of the effectiveness of such programmes. The aim was to identify whether there were any

gaps in supporting children with SpLD within the regular schools with reference to the SEN in KSA.

5.2.3.1 Resource rooms

Special education programmes generally refer to alternative educational provisions designed to meet the individual needs of students with learning disabilities. Examples of such educational provisions are the resource rooms which are basically rooms within a regular school that provides special educational services to learners with SpLD. Students with a disability are usually scheduled when to receive supplementary services in the resource room in addition to their regular classes. Students with SpLD are either given support individually or in a group of students with similar weaknesses although attention is given to each individual learner's needs after they have been assessed to determine their level of performance. To meet the needs of learners with SpLD, the resource room is usually more equipped and requires cooperation between the SEN teacher and the classroom teachers. In KSA, the MoE provides guidelines on the support given to learners with SpLD in the resource rooms, focusing on improving reading and arithmetic skills.

Although resource rooms have been found to be effective in improving the learning outcome for learners with SpLD, there has been controversy on whether they should be maintained or done away with, especially where parents and students fear to be labelled as disabled. In this section I therefore present data on teachers', parents' and students' attitude towards resource rooms. The two schools that were involved in the study had a resource room each, hence participants were drawn from each institution.

Although this data may not be representative of the whole of KSA, it may however provide insight for further study covering a wider scope.

Interviews were conducted with different teachers, depending on the role they were playing in the school, encompassing the classroom teachers selected from classes where there was a child with SpLD and the SEN teachers. The mothers of the children with SpLD and then students with SpLD were also interviewed. I also made observations on how students were supported in the resource rooms in both schools.

A general observation of the resource rooms showed that both schools had a larger resource room which was comprehensively equipped with visual, auditory, and sensory instructional materials in accordance with the MoE requirements. When I asked the participants what differences were there between the resource room and the regular classrooms they had similar views and opinions. For example, the Head teacher from School 1 stated that the resource room in her school had resources which helped enhancing the students' learning. She also explained that the teaching approaches used in the resource room were different from the approaches used in the regular classroom such as multi-sensory teaching aids, using computers, and one-to-one support. According to her, these approaches could not be achieved in the regular classroom due to the high number of students and the teachers' workload (Appendix 13: 79).

The Head teacher from School 2 had similar views about the resource room; she commented that the difference between the regular classroom and the resource room was huge. For instance, the class or group in the resource was smaller than in the regular classroom and students with SpLD received individualised help while in the regular classroom they were taught alongside other students. She explained some of

the teaching methods used by the SEN teachers in the resource room students with SpLD were sent for extra support. Students attended lessons for subjects such as maths and science in the regular classrooms, hence, the SEN teacher and the regular teachers had to work together to design timetables for students with SpLD to use the resource room (Appendix 14: 232).

In both schools students normally used the resource rooms twice a week which according to the mothers and one of the SEN teachers was inadequate. The four parents from both schools pointed out that their children needed more lessons in the resource room with the SEN teachers. According to their statements, two lessons per week in the resource room were not enough to support their children; there was a need for extra lessons. (Appendix 15: 355-356; Appendix 16: 412-413).

In addition the SEN teachers stated that, they were unable to accommodate more students in the resource room since each school had one SEN teacher and one resource room and they could only accommodate a maximum of 18 students in the SpLD programme (SEN Teacher, School 1, Appendix 13: 17) (SEN Teacher, School 2, Appendix 14: 179).

Just like in School 1, the resource room in School 2 met the requirements of the MoE for supporting students with SpLD. However, the SEN teacher in School 2 was more proactive in supporting the students with SpLD by working closely with the classroom teachers in conducting identification tests for assessing the students' strengths and weaknesses to determine their strengths and weaknesses. Besides being taught in the resource room, students with SpLD were provided with extra activities such as getting involved in games and cleaning.

5.2.3.1.1 Teachers' perceptions of the resource room

During the interviews, I sought the opinion of teachers about the resource rooms to determine whether they were supportive of the idea or not. The sample consisted of two SEN teachers, one from each school, and four classroom teachers, two from each school. The participants were asked about the differences between the resource rooms and the classrooms, and whether they thought students who were using the resource rooms benefited more than they would if they remained in the regular classrooms and whether by taking students from the regular classes influenced the general of the rest of the students. I also asked the participants what they thought would be the best provision for students with SpLD. The data gathered from the two schools suggested both positive and negative attitudes regarding teaching children with SpLD in resource rooms. For example the SEN Teacher from School 1 highlighted the advantages of the resource room along with the motivating elements that should be incorporated within the regular classrooms including making sure all classes are well equipped so that all learners can benefit.

The resource room is very important and I wish all the classrooms were like the resource rooms. Students feel more confident in the resource room because there is privacy and the SEN teacher helps them without ridiculing them like in the regular classroom. Changing learning styles and teaching methods help the students to understand and master their needs. The students like it more than the regular classrooms because they usually get a lot of rewards, moral support, gifts and presents (SEN Teacher, School 1, Appendix 13: 86).

The SEN Teacher from School 2 likewise suggested a range of options through which effective and efficient resource rooms can be created. She commented that the resource room was very important and should exist in every school. She further explained some major advantages for attending the resource room. According to her

students with SpLD were more comfortable in the resource room since they felt more supported, which increased their motivation to attend school. The teacher had the opinion that students with SpLD needed to be given an opportunity to learn and to participate in school activities to avoid engaging in negative behaviours like truancy and to build their confidence and self-esteem (Appendix 14: 239).

Classroom teachers in the two schools had conflicting perceptions of the resource rooms which I thought was a big concern. Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 from School 1 did not see the value of the resource rooms. Some of the reasons given by the teachers were that students with SpLD were not making any progress since in the resource rooms they were taught skills that were below their actual classroom levels. As a result, students with SpLD were lagging behind when they returned to the regular classroom, hence, they made no improvement in their academic performance (Appendix 13: 88-89).

Teachers in School 2 had different views as they felt that the resource room was very beneficial to the students. For example, they stated that they noticed some improvement on the students' academic achievement. Teacher 2 specifically pointed out that students with SpLD used to be inactive in her classes but after attending the resource room they became more active and participated during lessons (Appendix 14: 241-242).

Head teachers from both schools agreed on the importance of resource rooms. They considered the resource room to be very important for the intellectual development of the children with SpLD, since the teachers involved in supporting them in the resource room had been trained to deal with students with SpLD. According to the head teachers, the majority of students who were taken for extra support in the

resource room appeared highly motivated to learn and were eventually able to compete with their peers in the regular classes. The Head teacher for School 2 however felt that the resource rooms should be known as “support rooms”. The responses from the head teachers about the resource rooms can be found in Appendix 13: 85 and Appendix 14: 238.

The data from the teachers and head teachers confirmed some of the findings from the literature review that while the SEN teachers were positive regarding the resource rooms, the teachers in School 1 considered it as a foreign ideology and a waste of time. The contrasting views from the SEN teachers and the classroom teachers regarding the effectiveness of the resource rooms may be a pointer to a lack of collaboration in supporting students with SpLD in the schools.

5.2.3.1.2 The perceptions of parents of students with SpLD regarding the resource room

In this section I have presented data from the four parents of the children with SpLD two from each school. The sample consisted of four parents of students with SpLD, two from each of the schools involved. It was necessary to seek their opinion about their children being taken for further support in the resource rooms. As noted earlier, the success of the alternative programmes for students depended on the collaboration of the SEN teachers, the classroom teachers and parents. I asked the four parents what they thought about their children, and they all stated that although their children had been identified with SpLD, they believed that they were not ‘lazy’ or ‘foolish’ as they were most often thought of by the teachers. The data below shows the attitude of the four parents regarding their children being taken to the resource rooms for extra support.

When asked what they thought about the resource room, all the parents said that initially they were concerned that their children would be seen as having a disability which had a negative social image for the family due to cultural beliefs regarding people with disability. For example, Parent 1 from School 1 stated that she refused to send her daughter to the resource room at the beginning because she thought other children and the teachers would think of her as 'lazy' or 'stupid'. She further explained her fears of the social stigma regarding disability.

Due to the cultural and religious beliefs, women in KSA are generally segregated from the male society; whilst these practices are unfavourable to women, those with disabilities are more affected because they are segregated by fellow women as well. In a community where a woman's status is dependent on making 'a good marriage', being 'a good wife' and a 'good mother', women with disabilities do not stand a chance. They are often not considered marriageable, hence, parents who participated in this study were reluctant to send their daughters to the support programme for SpLD when they were first contacted by the schools for fear that their children would be seen as disabled (Appendix 15: 352- 53; Appendix 16: 418-19).

The parents stated that when they were contacted to be informed about their children's difficulties at school, and that they would be receiving extra support in the resource room, their initial reaction was to reject the idea. They did not want their children to be registered in the SpLD programme because they thought that the programme was for children with a disability but they did not consider their children to be disabled at all. Although one of the parents acknowledged that her daughter was facing difficulties in reading and writing, she never thought it was

such a big issue hence they did not bother much as a family. The following is an extract of what she said about her daughter:

...I was very concerned and scared when her school contacted us and told us that my daughter needs to be registered in the SpLD programme in her school. At the beginning we refused because we thought that programme is for stupid students and she is not stupid she understands but we did not pay attention to her at home (Parent 1, School 1, Appendix 15: 331).

From the data gathered from the parents it was apparent that they were more concerned about the social stigma associated with people with disability than anything else. This could be attributed to cultural factors. It was assessed from the interview of Parent 1 and Parent 2 from School 1 that they took part in the stereotyping associated with people with disability in KSA, especially girls who would as a result fail to get married since they are considered 'disabled' or 'stupid'. To avoid such stigmatization, the parents were opposed to the support programmes for SpLD, especially to the resource rooms because they were within regular schools.

A negative attitude towards people with disability is seen as the greatest barrier to the provision for students with SEN. Just as stated earlier, this can be attributed to a lack of awareness by the teachers and parents, who generally consider students with SpLD as having 'mental retardation', or since this condition is not as severe as the latter, children with SpLD are seen as 'lazy' or just not trying hard enough. As a result, most parents are usually not very comfortable with their children going to the resource rooms for extra support.

There was clear disparity between the data gathered from parents in School 1 and those from School 2 about their reaction when they were informed that their children would be put in a special programme. While some of the parents were supportive, the

other children in the family were opposed to it because they did not see anything wrong with their sisters. Parent 1 from School 2 stated that, when they were contacted by the school regarding their child's difficulties in reading and writing, the first reaction of her older sister was to reject the idea. She argued that her sister was not disabled, hence, she did not need to be registered in the programme which she believed were designed for disabled students (Appendix 16:418).

The responses from the parents indicate that although they were aware that their children were facing problems in reading and writing, they however did not associate the problem with being disabled. The parents saw the importance of their children receiving extra support in the resource room together with other children with SpLD, so that the problem could be alleviated. For example Parent 2 in School 2 stated that she agreed for her daughter to join the programme for students with SpLD after the SEN teacher explained to her the difficulties her daughter was facing in reading and writing, and that with extra support could make significant improvement. Although this parent did not deny that her daughter had a difficulty, she was opposed to her daughter being referred to as 'lazy' or 'stupid', to avoid stigmatization in the school.

The school said my daughter has a disability, but I think my daughter is not disabled I know that she is struggling with her reading and writing. I can't call her lazy or stupid because she is really clever. The SEN teachers talked to us and explained what learning disability means. She said that the students are not stupid, and there is nothing wrong with their IQ but they have difficulties in reading or writing and they need additional support (Parent 2, School 2, Appendix 16: 398).

The findings in this section indicated that the SEN teachers had a lot of influence in the teachers' and parents' attitudes towards the resource room. This was evident in that the four parents stated that initially they were opposed to having their children

enrolled in the SpLD programme but after the SEN teachers explained to them what it was all about, they then agreed to let their children receive extra support in the programme for students with SpLD.

5.2.3.1.3 Perceptions of the resource room of students with SpLD

In this section I present data on the perceptions of students with SpLD regarding the resource room. The sample consisted of four students with SpLD, two from each school. The purpose of this section was to investigate the experiences of students with SpLD in the resource rooms. Considering the ‘disruption’ of the normal socialisation when students with SpLD are taken for extra support in the resource rooms, and the stigma associated with disability in KSA, the success of the remedial programmes in the resource room depended significantly on the students’ perceptions towards the support they were getting in these rooms.

Data collected from the four students indicated that they had a positive attitude towards the resource room. They all felt that in the resource rooms they were able to get closer attention from the SEN teacher than when they were in the regular classes, which they said had very many students. The students said that they loved the resource room environment since it was more structured and well equipped as compared to the regular classes. They also said that SEN teachers were very motivating and seemed to understand them more since they kept encouraging them, hence making them feel comfortable in the resource room, which according to them rarely happened in the regular classrooms.

The response from Cd1 in School 1 showed that she was happy with the extra support she received in the resource room. The student said that the SEN Teacher in her school dealt with them better than the classroom teachers, and used different teaching

methods and resources while in the resource room. The student stated that she used to be rewarded with edibles like chocolates which she found very motivating. This was the student's response when I asked her opinion about the resource room:

With the SEN teacher I feel like I understand everything, I like going to her lessons, she is very nice with me, she gives me gifts and chocolate when I finish my lessons and answer all her questions. She also plays with us. She does lots of things like plays, talking dolls and drawing on the sand and a lot more (Child 1, School 1, Appendix 18: 533).

Cd2 in School 1 also stated that she was happy with the support she received in the resource room. She described the SEN Teacher in School 1 as nice and kind, and said that the resource room had more learning resources. Just like her colleague, Cd2 stated that she used to be rewarded by the SEN Teacher when in the resource room see Appendix 18: 534.

The two children in School 1 stated that besides concentrating on academic work, their SEN teacher allowed them to use the computer and play with some useful games during their free time which boosted their spelling and reading skills. During observations I witnessed the support the children were getting in the resource room (Appendix 20, Resource room Field Notes).

From the data gathered from the two students in School 1, the positive and friendly attitude of the SEN Teacher in their school had made them feel at ease when in the resource room. As a result of the support they were receiving the students stated that their performance had significantly improved. Improvement in their academic work boosted their confidence and self-concept since they felt welcome in the school despite the difficulties they were facing as a result of SpLD.

Children in School 2 had similar stories about the SEN Teacher in their school. The students stated that they were happy with the resource room because the SEN Teacher was very supportive in reading and writing. They also stated that they felt comfortable in the resource room because the general environment was good, unlike in the regular classroom. Below are the statements from the students in School 2 when I asked their opinion about the resource room and the support they received from the SEN Teacher.

Child 1, School 2

I like it more than the classroom. I feel happy when I go there also I feel relaxed. I listen carefully to my SEN teacher. The resource room is a very nice place; I like the wall paint and the decoration. I like the games (Appendix 19: 587).

Child 2, School 2

I feel very happy; I like the resource room a lot. But in the resource room we play and study at the same time. The SEN teacher allows us to use the computer and also sits with us on the floor. We read stories together and play with puzzles (Appendix 19: 588).

According to the students, learning in the resource room was more fun-like as compared to the regular classrooms. They described SEN teachers as friendly and able to use a variety of teaching methods to capture their attention, unlike in the regular classroom where they would feel harassed when they failed to complete assignments. They stated that the one-to-one sessions made them feel more comfortable, unlike when in the regular classrooms. Data collected from the students suggest the need for teachers to ensure uniformity in supporting learners with dyslexia so that as much as possible the same approaches applied in the resource room were used in regularly classes as well.

Children openly expressed their disappointment about the support they were getting from regular teachers which consequently led them to developing a dislike for some of them. For example, several pupils were quoted saying that they liked the SEN teachers more than other teachers because the SEN teachers were more supportive and provided them with incentives to encourage them to work hard and to participate in class (Appendix 18: 533-534; 19: 593-594). Although on one hand, it can be argued that SEN teachers had the training required for supporting learners with dyslexia, on the other hand, this could as well be attributed to other factors such as lack of support for inclusion of children with dyslexia and teachers seeing inclusion as an extra workload. All these factors were explored during the interviews conducted with the teachers in Section 5.5.1.

Teacher's patience was another issue that was raised by the children. According to the pupils, SEN teachers were more patient with them, hence they allowed them extra time to finish tasks unlike their counterparts who would punish them whenever they failed to finish tasks in time like their peers. As a result, the pupils openly expressed resentment for some teachers, especially the ones they felt failed to recognise their learning difficult. For example, one of the pupils was quoted saying how regular teachers shouted at them in class and hardly provided them with extra support (Appendix 19: 594). The findings suggest the need for teachers to accommodate learners with dyslexia by acknowledging that they could not learn at the same as their peers without dyslexia.

During interviews I asked students with SpLD in both schools whether there were any differences between SEN teachers and regular teachers; the majority of them

had a lot of praise for the SEN teachers. The four students who were interviewed stated that they loved their SEN teachers more than the regular teachers. Just as stated earlier in this section, some of the reasons given were that SEN teachers were sensitive to their needs while the regular teachers were more strict and provided them with little support. The students stated that regular teachers would sometimes criticize them openly in the presence of their peers which the students said was very frustrating and created fear in them (Appendix 18: 534). The finding indicated that classroom teachers in both schools applied generalized teaching approaches without regard for those with dyslexia, which was detrimental to learning outcomes for students with dyslexia.

According to Cd1 and Cd2 from School 1, their classroom teachers used to embarrass them by shouting at them and ridiculing them in front of their classmates whenever they failed to get questions right during lessons. The children stated that they were always nervous during reading sessions fearing that the teachers would ask them to read loud while they knew their difficulties in reading and without providing any support (Appendix 18:533-534). Data from the students in School 2 also indicated similar findings about the students' opinions regarding the support they were getting from their classroom teachers. The students felt that classroom teachers had a negative attitude towards them because of the challenges they were facing in class such that they would sometimes refuse them to socialize with their peers during free time until they finished their work (Appendix 19:593-594).

Teacher preparation was also mentioned by students as another factor which they felt impacted on their learning. The students stated that SEN teachers would be

more prepared than other regular teachers such that they would have extra resources to support them in class. For example, during reading lessons they would come with simpler materials for them to read, which was different from their peers. According to the students, SEN teachers made sure that they were not embarrassed in class and had high expectations for all students, and they were very supportive for them to achieve. The students said that as a result they felt comfortable and welcome in the schools because SEN teachers were approachable and offered additional support in the resource room. (Appendix 19:593-594).

From the above findings, it was evident that all of the four students who participated in the study were happy with the extra support they were getting from the resource room. Since the students spend just a small fraction of the learning time in the resource rooms, it was necessary that the classroom teachers and the SEN teachers worked closely to ensure that once children with SpLD return to the regularly classes they received the same motivation just like in the resource room.

What was notable in the data collected from the students was that while they were happy joining the programmes for students with SpLD, their parents seemed uncomfortable with the fact that their children could be having a disability, hence some of them were opposed to the programmes. The difference in attitude towards resource rooms as noted between parents and the students could possibly be attributed to the fact that students were more focused on the support they were getting, while the parents were concerned about the social perception. Just as I stated earlier in Chapter one section 1.4, people with disability are viewed with suspicion in KSA due to cultural and religious beliefs which attribute disability to

either a curse or punishment from God. Still the belief that people with disability are not productive, such that men may not marry a girl with disability, could be another factor why the parents did not want their children to join the SpLD programmes.

5.3 Awareness of the concept of SpLD

This section is a description of the fieldwork involved in collecting data relating to teachers' awareness of SpLD, to determine whether SEN policies can be effectively implemented in regular schools in KSA to support children with SpLD in order to improve academic performance. Data collection involved observations and interviewing teachers and the parents of the children in the two schools that were involved. The data in this section responds to the issue of teachers' advisors' and parents' perspectives regarding SpLD from two primary schools in one city in KSA. It was important to investigate teachers' and parents understanding of the concept of SpLD because it determined the support given to the children. This is also covered in Chapter six as I analysed the data and the implication of the theoretical framework in terms of biological, cognitive and behavioral levels.

5.3.1 Teachers' awareness

5.3.1.1 Awareness in School 1

Chapter ten of the SEN guidebook provides the guidelines for awareness programmes on SpLD including, (1) Awareness in school, including the role of the school and the role of SEN teachers; (2) Awareness outside school which includes (a) family awareness, (b) society awareness (Ministry of Education, 2013). The methods of creating the awareness are also provided in the document, comprising lectures,

seminars, educational plays, movies (documentaries), exhibitions, consultations, school activities, and school magazines e.g. the resource room magazine. According to the SEN policy, the roles of the SEN teacher comprise: to create awareness among parents by inviting them to schools; to make contact with parents; sending brochures and leaflets to parents; sending copies of IEPs to parents so that they can give their opinions; providing parents with activities which would enhance the students' education when at home; to periodically notify parents about their children's progress; and to notify parents about events and occasions concerning SpLD.

To investigate teachers' awareness of SpLD, I asked all the participants '*What does SpLD mean to you?*' and these were examples of their responses:

HT S1	SpLD is inability to learn, it may happen in any person's life.
SEN Tr S1	SpLD is difficulties which include developmental and academic skills.
StA S1	It means the students have difficulties in some subjects and they need help.
Tr1 S1	It isn't a handicap or a disease. I think the learning of the student is very slow.
Tr2 S1	I think it is a disease, students with SpLD are very poor and different from other students, and their minds are damaged. I think it's a disease, which is related to the brain.

Appendix 13: 31-35

Nonetheless, during the course of data collection in School 1, I did not witness any awareness events among the teachers on how to update their understanding of SpLD or on how to deal with children with SpLD and their parents. I also noted that during the term the SEN teacher did not organise any workshops for classroom teachers, which was one of her responsibilities, in order to create awareness among the teachers regarding children with SpLD (Ministry of Education, 2013: 118). I asked the SEN

teacher in the school what challenges she faces while working with students with SpLD and she had this to say.

Lack of awareness by the classroom teachers is another problem such that they don't help me and they don't help the students with SpLD so that's why sometimes we don't see much improvements (SEN Teacher, School 1, Appendix 13: 98).

Data collected from School 1 indicated that children with SpLD were treated just like other students, since the teachers lacked that knowledge on how to modify the curriculum to meet their needs, as well as how to work with the parents of such children. Just as I have stated earlier, teachers in School 1 preferred to exclude students with SpLD from regular classrooms since they argued that they lacked the knowledge and training to be in a position to support them effectively within the regular classrooms. They at the same time felt that children with SpLD were an extra burden to their work which they said was already too much due to overpopulation in the school.

To be in a position to meet the needs of students with SpLD, teachers required a common benchmark, guidance, and advice from the MoE which they said was lacking. As a result, teachers excluded children who could not cope in regular classrooms so that they could concentrate on other children who were considered 'normal'.

When I assess them in the classroom I assess them just like other students, so they are required to master and pass the assessment and I should consider them just like other for example if the students are required to be assessed out of 100% then the students with SpLD are required to be assessed in the same way. Then why they study in the resource room lower skills while they are not required to pass them? (Teacher 2, School 1, Appendix 13: 89).

When I asked the participants what they thought were the causes of SpLD to find out more about their understanding of the concept, they all had different reasons as to why children would have SpLD. Some of the causes given were poor nutrition, alcoholism, a genetic origin, or diseases, and others thought spending too much time on the computer or other devices like tablets could be the cause.

5.3.1.2 Awareness in School 2

Just like in School 1, the SEN Teacher in School 2 stated that creating awareness among teachers was a challenge she was facing. She stated that when she organized workshops teachers would not be willing to attend:

When I prepare some workshops and invite classroom teachers some of them don't attend, they don't care. They just keep blaming the education system, the students or their families (SEN Teacher, School 2, Appendix 14: 251).

However, in School 2 there were regular meetings with the parents of the students with SpLD. The data collected from participants in School 2 indicated that the SEN teacher was keen to follow the MoE guidelines, including conducting regular school workshops, contacting parents, making use of the resource room, and creating awareness among teachers and other students during assemblies and other social events. In School 2, there were attempts to create awareness about SpLD through brochures, and flyers on how to accommodate students with SpLD.

The importance of SEN teachers' contribution in creating awareness among other teachers leads to positive attitudes towards students with SEN. School 2 had the policy documents which the teachers paid attention to in their effort to meet the needs of students with SpLD in the school. The impact of the use of the SEN policy was noticeable during interviews and observations because I noted that students were

regularly taken to the resource room for further support and the teachers seemed to have a positive attitude towards supporting students with SpLD.

Just like in School 1, to find out teachers' understanding of SpLD concept in School 2, I posed the same question as in School 1, '*What does SpLD mean to you?*' and these were examples of their responses:

HT S2	It is a difficulty with letters or numbers; a simple stumble which can be overcome if the students were helped and supported by their mothers, classroom teachers, and SEN teachers.
SEN Tr S2	I have studied this concept at university and it means the students have difficulties in reading, writing and spelling or in mathematics. In the ministry policy this term does not exist. So we describe them as learning disability.
StA S2	It is a difficulty. It is not a problem. The students are confused and the information did not reach them properly.
Tr1 S2	I think they are not difficulties but the lack of support, and lack of care from the first grade.
Tr2 S2	It is the lack of ability to engage with the educational process and with the classroom environment.

Appendix 14: 184-188

From the participants' responses there is some evidence that some of them did not consider SpLD as a disability as such, but rather a problem resulting from negligence or poor foundation in the early years in education. With such perceptions of SpLD it was highly possible that the teachers may not bother to make extra effort to support the children unlike they would with other types of SEN.

The interview with SEN Teacher from School 2 also indicated that the lack of awareness in the society was the biggest problem for students with SpLD. She referred to it as a behavioural problem, which is covered in Chapter six.

I think the biggest problem that faces students with SpLD is the lack of awareness in the society. The society is a barrier against them. If these students have some strength in particular areas like arts or handcrafts, these strengths could be dead because of the society views about them (SEN Teacher, School 2, Appendix 14: 245).

Data collected from the two schools regarding teachers' awareness of SpLD suggests inconsistencies in the policy implementation for supporting students with SpLD. For example teachers in School 1 stated that there were no awareness programmes to create awareness regarding SpLD, and appeared unwilling to accommodate students with SpLD; in contrast, the teachers in School 2 who were receiving some information through flyers were a bit more accommodating. The contrast in data indicates that the MoE was not keen on making sure that SEN policies were implemented as required. This could consequently result in the children with SpLD being neglected in most schools.

5.3.2 Parents' awareness

In this section I present data on parents' awareness of SpLD to determine the support children were receiving out of school which was an important element of inclusive education practice.

To find out the parents' understanding of SpLD, I asked them whether they considered their children to have a disability, their responses indicated they did not consider their children as having a disability. For example, Parent 1 from School 1 stated that her child did not have a disability, and that she understood everything, the only problem was that they did not encourage her to study at home. Parent 2 from the same school also believed that her daughter was 'normal' just like her twin

sister. She referred to her daughter as a 'spoilt' girl who looked for excuses to skip school (Appendix 15: 331-332). The responses by parents in School 2 were very similar as both parents indicated that their children did not have disabilities. Parent 1 explained that her daughter sometimes got distracted easily when she was teaching her at home. She described her as 'absent- minded' but had no disability. Parent 2 also thought that her daughter was neither disabled, lazy nor stupid. She stated that although her child was struggling in reading and writing, she was clever (Appendix 16: 397-398).

Before posing that question I had asked the parents what they thought were causes of their children's learning difficulties. Parent 1 from School 1 was concerned that the difficulties faced by her daughter were related to 'mental retardation'. She stated that she had an older son who was diagnosed with a mental retardation the reason that made her and her husband very concerned about their daughter. Parent 2 from school 1 thought that SpLD was a disease or a serious brain damage problem (Appendix 15:328-329). Responses from Parents in School 2 indicated the similar findings as Parent 1 believed that SpLD was a handicap but the students did not show any obvious disabilities and also she agreed with Parent 2 who believed that the physical environment where the students receive their learning was the cause of their destabilise (Appendix 16: 394-395).

The responses from parents indicate that they actually did not associate the problem their children were facing at school with disability. This could partly be attributed to the fact that persons with disability in KSA were viewed with a lot of suspicion just as I stated earlier. To avoid such stigma, families of such children often deny

that their children have any disability. By associating SpLD with being naughty or spoilt complicated further the efforts made to support such children.

5.4 Identification of students with SpLD in primary schools in KSA

In chapter three, section 3.9 I stated that in KSA the Ministry of Education (2013) has a provision for supporting children with SpLD, which aims at ensuring that they have equal educational rights as the rest of the students. In this section, I present data from the two schools regarding identification and assessment of SpLD. I start the section by highlighting the criteria for identification and assessment of students with SpLD. Data regarding the perceptions of teachers and parents of the assessment of students with SpLD is also presented in this section.

5.4.1 Identification process

According to the SEN policy guidelines, assessment of SpLD is generally done by the SEN teacher, the regular class teacher for the student, the child's parent and other professionals like the student advisor and other social workers. The aim of this section is to determine whether policy on identification and assessment translate into practice. The data was collected through interviews and observations from participants in the two schools.

Nonetheless, although the SEN policy provided guidelines on identification and assessment of SpLD, data collected from the two schools suggested lack of standardised tools for assessing students with SpLD. As a result, teachers had devised their own tests for assessing students suspected to have SpLD in their classrooms, resulting in each school having different assessment methods for SpLD. For example, in School 1 the SEN Teacher stated that classroom teachers conducted pre-tests on

students suspected to have SpLD which included writing tasks. Both SEN teachers explained in detail how they conducted the assessment to determine whether students had SpLD.

Nonetheless, there were discrepancies in how they were doing it. For example the SEN Teacher in School 2 stated that she used to use survey method but she stopped due to the high population in the school. There seemed to be inconsistencies in the method designed for use by all institutions; hence it was at the SEN teachers' discretion to use the method they thought was better.

From what I gathered in School 1, the first step to the assessment process was by identifying students whose academic performance was significantly low as compared to their peers. Their persistent poor performance was taken as the indicator that the student could be showing signs of SpLD. According to SEN Teacher in School 1, simple tests would be administered to determine the student's level of performance. After that they would then move on to preparing an IEP for the student (SEN Teacher, School 1, Appendix 13: 62).

School 2 had a different strategy for identifying and assessing students with SpLD. According to the SEN Teacher in School 2, they used a survey method to identify them. The SEN Teacher however described the process as lengthy because it involved conducting surveys in every grade. The surveys would initially be done by the SEN teacher, who would then identify the students who showed difficulties in reading, writing and spelling and then do further assessment.

I used to use the survey method. But you know this method is useless. Can you imagine that I would scan 706 papers or results alone and then I would identify those who didn't achieve their academic level and then pick them and do further assessments? This sounds crazy. I can apply this method with one or two or even three classes but not the whole school. I did this method

a few times but not anymore, it is very difficult. I rely on the transferring method, which is easier (SEN Teacher, School 2, Appendix 14: 215).

According to the SEN Teacher in School 2, students referred for further assessment would then be subjected to more tests before they were finally determined to have SpLD or not. When the students were transferred to the SEN teachers they were given reading, writing and spelling tests which were blew their actual level. The SEN Teacher then explained that after identifying the students with and before enrolling them in the support programme for SpLD she had to contact their parents in order to do further assessment before designing their IEPs (Appendix 14: 215).

In School 2, once the identification and assessment procedure was complete and students suspected to have SpLD identified, their parents would then be invited to the school to discuss how they would be supported. According to the SEN policy guidelines, SEN teachers were expected to liaise with the parents once they identified children with SpLD. The parents were then expected to sign a consent form to allow the school to provide assistance to the child and move them in the support programmes for SpLD.

Data collected from both schools indicated a lack of supervision on how the SEN policy guidelines were implemented in the schools. For example, whereas the SEN Teacher in School 2 seemed keen to follow the policy guidelines, in School 1 the SEN Teacher appeared not to be very keen. From this discrepancy in the data schools, I sought to find out from the SEN Supervisor how the students with SpLD were assessed, but the information I gathered just complicated the information I already had. According to the SEN Supervisor there was a committee or team of professionals who were required to conduct the assessment, but according to the data gathered in

the two schools it is only the SEN Teacher who was conducting the assessment (SEN Supervisor, Appendix 17: 462).

Interviews with classroom teachers in both schools suggested that they were hardly involved in the assessment of students as it was supposed to be. In fact, they were not aware how the assessment was conducted. When I asked them how students with SpLD were assessed some of them just said they did not know and that I should ask the SEN teacher. Teachers from both schools had no idea about the assessment and they only had to report or transfer any student whose academic achievement was low (Appendix 13: 64-65) (Appendix 14: 217- 218).

The findings about identification and assessment of students with SpLD in both schools highlighted the shortcomings faced by different schools in KSA with regard to the assessment of students with SpLD in relation to multidisciplinary teams, IQ tests, adaptive behaviour scales, and academic scales

5.4.1.1 Teachers' perceptions of the assessment process

In this section I present data on teachers' perceptions of the assessment process. In the section above I noted that although according to the policy guidelines for SpLD, teachers were supposed to be part of the assessment team, the teachers from both schools said that they were not involved, and they were not aware how the assessments were conducted. While the Head Teacher in School 1 felt that the assessment was adequate (Appendix 13: 67), the rest of the participants chose not to make any comment (Appendix 13: 69-71). In contrast to School 1, participants in School 2 stated that the assessment was good (Appendix 14: 222-224). Nonetheless,

both SEN teachers in the two schools felt that the assessment for SpLD was inadequate and needed to be improved and to be more standardised.

SEN Teacher, School 1

The assessment is not good. Actually it is designed to test the students in the lower skills in Arabic literacy or maths. These skills were drawn from the MoE curriculum. This is not right, and this is not how SpLD are assessed in the advanced countries like the UK or USA. They should be given a suitable standardised assessment, which includes an intelligence test, and tests for developmental and academic skills. Here we just focus on the academic skills. The policies don't care about the developmental skills, but as SEN teacher I try to include these skills in my lessons or some games or some teaching methods (Appendix 13: 68).

SEN Teacher from School 2 also agreed that the tests they used to assess students with SpLD were not standardised. The set of tests used were designed by a group of SEN teachers and they were curriculum based assessments where she had to find out how students were progressing in basic academic skills such as in reading, writing, spelling and maths. She further suggested that the MoE should consider this problem and try to come up with new standardised tests for SpLD (Appendix 14:221).

5.4.1.2 Parent's perceptions of the assessment process

To determine the parents' perceptions of the assessment process I first asked them whether they were involved in the assessment of their children. Their responses indicated that they only had to meet the SEN teachers in order to explain the idea of the support programmes to them. After that the parents had the choice whether they accept to enrol their children or not. Parent 1 and Parent 2 from School 1 stated that they have been contacted by the SEN teacher before the teacher conducted the assessment. The teacher explained to them the concept of the programme and how

their children would be supported. After their meeting with the SEN teacher they signed the consent letter straight away (Appendix 15: 337-338).

Parents in School 2 also had been contacted by the school before the SEN teacher conducted the assessment. It was important to gain the parents' permission and give them enough information about the nature of the assessment and the support given to their children (Appendix 16: 403-404).

From the parents' responses, it was apparent that they too were not actively involved in the assessment of their children. Although they were consulted before the assessments were done, they were not part of the team involved in the actual assessment. I then asked the parents whether they thought the assessments of their children were adequate. All four parents were happy with the assessment which they stated that helped them to understand their children much better hence becoming more supportive.

Parents in School 1

Pt1 S1	I think yes, it is good to have such assessment and support like that. It helps the students to identify their problems and help them to overcome their difficulties when they are still young.
Pt2 S1	Yes the assessment helps us to identify our daughter's difficulties in reading, writing and spelling. We used to think that she hated the school or that she was just a spoilt girl.

Appendix 15: 340-341

Parents in School 2

Pt1 S2	Yes the assessment helps us to know about the difficulties was facing in reading, writing and spelling.
Pt2 S2	I think yes, without the assessment we wouldn't have known about my daughter difficulties.

Appendix 16: 406-407

5.5 Inclusive Education for students with SpLD

A significant body of research globally indicates that teachers' and parents' attitudes towards inclusion of learners with SEN in mainstream schools plays a critical role in the successful implementation of inclusive education policy. In this section I examined the participants' perceptions of inclusion of learners with SpLD in the regular schools. In this section data is presented from the teachers, parents and students to determine how supportive they were of the support programmes for SpLD in the regular schools. Although the SEN teachers in both schools were supposed to play similar roles, the teachers in School 1 said that they were never given any support by either the SEN Teacher or by the SEN Supervisor from the MoE. Besides identifying and teaching students with SpLD, SEN teachers in both schools were required to raise awareness about SpLD in the schools and to the parents.

In section 3.9.1, I explored the literature regarding inclusive education from an international perspective, and then went on to highlight how the concept impacted on the education of students with SpLD in KSA. In this section I present data from the participants' perceptions of inclusive education for students with SpLD to determine how the policy on inclusive education was implemented in the school, considering that the call for inclusive education has been a controversial issue in many countries due to the complexity in its implementation.

5.5.1 Teachers' perceptions of inclusive education for children with SpLD

The data collected from teachers in School 1 indicated that the teachers were not very supportive of SpLD programmes. For instance I noted that in School 1 the students with SpLD were not given adequate support by the classroom teachers

despite the fact that they were experiencing difficulties in reading, writing and spelling. Although the SEN teacher in the school made efforts to support the children and their parents, her efforts could not make much impact without the support of other teachers. The interview conducted with the teachers in both schools showed that they had no school policy on SpLD. Some teachers stated that they had not even seen the policy from the MoE; some of the participants stated that they were just made to sign documents which they did not bother to read (Appendix 13: 105-107, Appendix 14: 257-260).

During data collection, I noted that the two schools had different cultures in relation to supporting students with SpLD. For example, in School 1, the classroom teachers advocated for exclusion of children with SpLD who they argued should be taught in their own classes by the SEN teachers. Their argument was that the SEN teachers were trained to teach such students hence they should take full responsibility of teaching them (Appendix 13: 130-131).

In School 2 the situation was different. Classroom teachers supported the inclusion of students with SpLD in their classroom. Teacher 1 felt sad for students with SpLD as she thought those students were vulnerable. She also added that likely most the teachers in her school welcomed those students in their classrooms. Likewise Teacher 2 thought that it was unfair to separate them from regular classroom due to their difficulties she further agreed that students with SpLD should be taught alongside other students within the classrooms (Appendix 14: 283-284).

There were diverse opinions about inclusion of students with SpLD in the regular schools, with some participants advocating for exclusion of students with SpLD, while others had no problem having these children in their classes. Some of the reasons given by the teachers are analysed below. Both Head Teachers and SEN Teachers in the two schools supported inclusion of children with SpLD in the regular schools, although some of them stated that extra support to the teachers was required. Some of the issues that were mentioned by the participants which hampered inclusion of children with SpLD in regular schools are highlighted below.

5.5.1.1 Understaffing

Understaffing in the two schools was cited as the major reason why the teachers found it difficult to include children with SEN. For example School 1 had a population of 700 students distributed in 21 classes against 40 classroom teachers. Twelve of these teachers were permanently in lower primary, while the rest of the teachers taught different subjects in the upper classes. According to the teachers the high teacher/pupil ratio made it difficult to cater for the needs of children with SpLD in the regular classrooms. The head teachers of the two schools stated that they needed extra teachers so that the schools could cope with the number of children they had.

A major concern was raised by Head Teacher from School 1 regarding the teachers' qualification level. She stated that most of the teachers she had in her school had a teaching qualification which they obtained more than 20 to 30 years ago but they did not have a degree. Those teachers had to study two years after finishing the high

school, and then they had been given a teaching certificate which qualified them to work as teachers in primary schools. The Head Teacher also stated that she had to contact the MoE from time to time asking them to allocate new qualified graduates but the MoE was making excuses such as lack of money which she doubted (Appendix 13: 25).

Head teacher from School 2 believed that the primary stage was a very important key stage in children's learning, therefore it was very important to employ more qualified teachers who held a degree level and more specialised in subjects. The Head Teacher also pointed at the same problem indicated by Head teacher from School 1 but she further thought that one SEN teacher in her school was not enough to support more students with SpLD, she called for another SEN teacher, and therefore more students with SpLD would be accommodated (Appendix 14: 178).

The shortage lies in the distribution of teachers. There were not enough teachers who were both qualified and willing to teach students with SpLD in their classes. There were not enough qualified individuals in particular specialties, such as special education, or other subjects. The most obvious consequence of the shortage was the quality of education that students received was not adequate according to the classroom teachers. Consequently, the students were being taught by classroom teachers who lacked the knowledge and skills necessary for quality instruction, or being waited for their chance to be admitted in the support programme for SpLD.

5.5.1.2 High Classroom Population

Teachers from schools stated that the number of students per class was too large for them to be able to accommodate students with SpLD, who usually require more

support as compared to other students. The following were some of their statements when I asked the teachers what challenges they faced having students with SpLD in their classes. According to the teachers, if they had fewer students in their classrooms they would be able to apply all teaching strategies to support students with SpLD. The teachers stated that due to the high number of students per class the classes were crowded and filled with furniture such that they have no space for learning corners like the library and technology corners see Appendix 13: 28 and Appendix 14: 247/290.

The SEN Supervisor considered the high teacher/ pupil ratio as an obstacle to meeting the needs of students with SpLD within the regular schools, which resulted in a shortage of resources for supporting them.

The high population of students in the regular classrooms is an obstacle for students with SpLD in public education. The high teacher/pupil ratio makes it hard for teachers to apply the teaching strategies recommended by the MoE. Another challenge with high population is that the classrooms are not well equipped to meet the needs of students with SpLD (SEN Supervisor, Appendix 17: 466).

The data collected from participants indicated that the majority of them, including the SEN Supervisor, considered high population of students in regular classrooms as a barrier to inclusive education.

5.5.1.3 Congested timetable

In addition to large classrooms, the congested timetable was another issue which teachers stated as a hindrance to effective support for students with SpLD. Due to understaffing in the schools, teachers stated that they had more lessons than they could cope with, and this according to them had an adverse effect on their teaching

performance and the overall performance of the students. Some of their statements can be found in Appendix 13: 29 and Appendix 14: 181.

The data from the participants have shown that an overloaded curriculum can lead to students with SpLD being neglected due to the teachers' inability to cope with the workload. In KSA, studies have shown the gap between pedagogy, curriculum and organisational needs as I stated in Chapter one, section 1.3.

5.5.1.4 Funding

Shortage of funding was another issue which came up as a barrier to inclusive education for students with SpLD. The interviews with the SEN teachers suggested that they were sometimes forced to equip the resource rooms from their own pockets. Both SEN teachers were in agreement that with adequate funding there would be better support not only for students with SpLD but for other students as well.

Both SEN teachers were facing a lack of financial support. According to their statements, schooling resources that cost money, including smaller class sizes, and additional supports were positively associated with the student outcomes. Without these resources they would not be able to teach the students effectively. Therefore they had to spend their own money to even decorate the resource room or equip the room with necessary educational tools (Appendix 13: 116) (Appendix 14: 269).

5.5.1.5 Teacher training

Another issue which emerged from the data gathered from participants was that teachers were not adequately trained to deal with students with SpLD. Each of the two schools had one SEN teacher against a very high population of students who required their help. The SEN teachers stated that they could not cope with the number of

students who needed their support. According to the Head Teacher in School 1, the teachers in her school were not adequately trained, and only a few had a university degree (Head Teacher, School 1, Appendix 13: 25).

The situation was similar in School 2, where the SEN teacher felt that she too needed further training to be able to support the students with SpLD. She stated that sometimes she struggled with some literacy grammar or maths lessons which she did not used to study at university (Appendix 14: 275).

The SEN teachers and the Head teachers from both schools felt that ongoing professional training would keep teachers up-to-date on new research on how children learn, emerging technology tools for the classroom, new curriculum resources, and more. The best professional development is ongoing, experiential, collaborative, and connected to and derived from working with students and understanding their culture.

The support for SEN teachers and classroom teachers generally was often uneven and inadequate. Therefore, more attention was required to be paid to providing them with early and adequate support, especially if they were assigned to demanding school environments (Appendix 13: 116; Appendix 14: 275).

5.5.2 Parents' perceptions of inclusive education for their children with SpLD

In this section I present data on the perception of the parents of the students with SpLD on their inclusion in the regular schools. I stated earlier that in KSA persons with disability are viewed with a lot of suspicion due to different myths about the causes of disability, which is sometimes seen as a curse, or punishment for something wrong the family may have done. The success of inclusive practices

depended heavily on the parents' support of the process. To find out the parents' perception of inclusive practice for students with SpLD, I asked what their opinion was about including students with SpLD in the regular schools.

Parents from School 1 stated that they would never send their daughters to a special school as long as they had no disabilities. They commented that was their rights in education to be taught in a regular public school and additional support would be given to them (Appendix 15: 358-359). Parents from School 2 had also agreed that their children should not be taught separately and the head teacher and other school staff should encourage their inclusion in order to build a cohesive society (Appendix 16: 424-425).

The four parents were supportive of their children learning in the regular schools alongside other students. However, this was not so much for the support they were getting but rather by the fear of the stigma associated with disability. Taking their children to a special school would expose their children and the family to the rest of society which would make them feel uncomfortable.

5.5.3 Children's feelings about learning alongside others in the regular classrooms

In this section I present data regarding the students' experience of being in a regular school. The four students I interviewed stated that they felt embarrassed because they could not read as their mates in the classroom did, something which made them to avoid some classes. I first asked the students whether they felt like they were dealt differently at school.

Cd1 from School 1 stated that her classroom teachers and other classmates called her lazy because she used to go to the resource room. She also added the girls in her

class described the resource room as the room for lazy students. Cd2 also commented that her classroom teachers and other students thought of her as a lazy student because the extra support she was given by the SEN teacher (Appendix 18: 536-537).

Students from School 2 had the same experience about being described as lazy by teachers or other children. Cd1 noted that whenever she worked with a group in her class, the students did not help her and instead annoyed her by calling her stupid or lazy. Cd2 also said that the students in her class call her lazy because she was not able to read or write as if they did (Appendix 19: 596-597).

From the data gathered from the students with SpLD, it was evident that the other students mocked them for their poor performance which made them uncomfortable. I then sought the students' opinion regarding being in the regular classrooms. Students from School 1 felt embarrassed, low self-esteem, alone and other students sometimes refused to talk to them (Appendix 18: 539-540). Also students from School 2 felt embarrassed when they read in front of their classmates or when they could not give correct answers. Cd 1 stated that she tried to hide herself during reading sessions to avoid being picked up by her classroom teacher. Also the children felt sad and emotional when other students refused to give them a hand during group activities (Appendix 19: 599-600).

The response by the students corresponded with the response by the Head Teacher in School 1 when I asked her what challenges students with SpLD faced in the school. The Head Teacher stated that students with SpLD were generally thought of as

careless or lazy by the teachers and other students which sometimes made some of them avoid school (Head Teacher, School 1, Appendix 13: 91).

5.6 Observation data

In this section I analyse observations data from the classrooms and resource rooms. Observational data complemented the data collected from interviews to determine whether participants did what they said they did (Robson, 2002).

5.6.1 Analysis of reading difficulties of students with SpLD and teachers' responses

During the observation, I noted that there was a lot of distraction during lessons, for example, while carrying on with the lessons of Cd1 from School 1, another teacher just opened the door and starting asking loudly about things which were not related to the lesson to the teacher who was in class teaching. When she saw me sitting with the students she said to the classroom teacher loudly. *“Oh you have the SpLD researcher in your classroom? Poor you – you have SpLD students in your class this year!”* Then she said, *“Thanks God I don’t have any SpLD students in my classroom this year, otherwise I’d be crazy!”* (Appendix 21.2, Classroom Field Notes).

From the above observation, it was evident that the teachers were generally not comfortable teaching students with SpLD in their classes. It was also evident that they hardly cared about distracting students during lessons. It was evident that the teachers lacked awareness about how to deal with students with SpLD.

The literature review in Chapter three confirmed that most teachers feel that they lack the knowledge and training to teach students with dyslexia in their classrooms. Findings of the past literature indicate that teachers do seem to know that dyslexia involves issues with reading and processing. However, teachers are not aware of the strategies to deal with students with dyslexia. During the observation, it was evident that the teachers from School 1 were getting tired of the students with SpLD, hence they kept shouting at them whenever they were unable to read during lessons. From the classroom observation, it can also be said that the teachers were often frustrated and had a negative attitude towards students with SpLD and did not integrate especial strategies to enhance the learning of these students (Appendix 21.1, 21.2, 21.3, Classroom Field Notes).

5.6.2 Writing difficulties of SpLD students and teachers' responses

From what I observed in School 1, during writing and spelling lessons, I noted that initial strategies adopted by Teacher 1 for introducing the words and letters in during lessons were inappropriate. Even when the teacher was aware of the presence of students with SpLD in the class, she used the general methods of teaching, disregarding the needs of students with SpLD. The teacher did not consider the use of formal Arabic language while teaching as states in the education policy in KSA (Ministry of Education, 2008). She also did not consider the use of modern technologies like a laptop and a projector, which could have helped in gaining the cognition of the students in the classroom. In addition, the teacher did not use the handout strategy as suggested by the MoE (Ministry of Education, 2008) (Appendix 21.1, Classroom Field Notes).

The classroom teachers in School 1 dealt with all the students the same, including students with SpLD, instead of giving extra time to the students with SpLD so that they could complete the tasks.

In contrast Teacher 2 from School 2 used initial strategies and adapted appropriate educational and pedagogic practice during her literacy lessons. The teacher used strategies and rewarding methods as well as supporting students with SpLD during the lessons and engaging them in classroom activities. The teacher used the formal Arabic language during her teaching and also while talking to the students. (Appendix 21.4, Classroom Field Notes).

Teacher 2 from School 2 was the only classroom teacher in this study who had a degree in Arabic language while the other three classroom teachers had only a diploma in teaching for more than 20 years ago. This might give an indication of the importance of subject specialization in teaching particularly at primary stage.

5.6.3 Teachers' effectiveness in spelling lessons in the resource room

Another issue noted during observation was that the SEN Teacher in School 1 started the lesson with an interesting game, which encouraged the participation of the students with SpLD. I noted during the observation that the teacher gave chances to students to identify their mistakes. Another key issue from observation was that the strategies employed by the SEN Teacher were student-centred and created learning interest in the students. Instead of shouting when students made mistakes, the SEN Teacher would assist them in learning the words. A rewarding strategy is always considered as an effective tool for motivating students (Appendix 20.2, Resource Room Field Notes).

During observation I also noted that the SEN Teacher employed visual aids such as modelling clay for helping students learn. Visual aids were considered effective learning tools, as they foster the participation of the students in the lessons. I also noted that each student with SpLD had a doll in the resource room; the SEN Teacher used them as part of their rewarding strategies in order to encourage the students to learn. They would put a poppy pin or a clip on the doll's hair every time a student answered questions correctly; if the student collected five clips then she would be rewarded. Rewarding was viewed as an effective pedagogy and it assisted the students in learning words (Appendix 20.3, Resource Room Field Notes).

Data from interviews further confirmed the earlier data observations. SEN teachers from both schools stated that the students were not given extra time in the classroom in order to recall what they had taught in the resource room. That, they said, was the reason students failed in their tests. My field notes observations in the classroom and resource room confirmed that the classroom teachers and SEN teachers sometimes were not giving proper attention to the children with SpLD and doing other tasks side by side like attending to phone calls, or talking with other teachers and students. It was found that a poor teaching environment and lack of attention from teachers further worsened the cases and did not contribute to the improvement of learning components of a cognitive level in a learner (Appendix 20.4, Resource Room Field Notes; Appendix 21.6, 21.7, Classroom Field Notes).

5.7 Conclusion

The main aim of this chapter has been to correlate the findings gathered through primary investigation with the literature related to the provision for students with

SpLD, and with the MoE policies. Four key themes emerged from participants' responses and the findings of past studies. The themes which emerged after the data analysis related to educational provision for students with SpLD in KSA, participants' awareness of the concept of SpLD, identification and assessment of SpLD and participants' perceptions of the inclusion of students with SpLD in the regular schools.

The data suggested a lack of follow-up of the implementations of the policy for students with SpLD, with teachers citing lack of supervision by the MoE. The data also suggested lack of awareness programmes concerning the concept of SpLD, with some participants stating that they hardly ever have seminars or workshops in the schools. The data also suggested that the assessment of students with SpLD was not performed by multidisciplinary teams, so that only the SEN teachers were conducting the assessments, with very little input from the classroom teachers and the parents. There was discrepancy among the teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SpLD in the regular classrooms, with some teachers suggesting that there should be special classrooms for students with SpLD which should have teachers who were specialists in handling such children.

There was a huge gap found between policy and practice. Some of the factors which emerged as barriers to the inclusion of students with SpLD in the regular schools included understaffing in schools, high population in classrooms, and overworked teachers. Shortage of funding meant that SEN teachers were sometimes forced to equip the resource room themselves, and finally teachers were not adequately trained to handle students with SpLD. Thus, these identified gaps further

led to the need to re-examine the theoretical framework in the next chapter (which is drawn from Frith's framework of understanding dyslexia) by examining individually the biological, cognitive and behavioural perspectives associated with dyslexia in order to identify the areas for future improvement (Frith, 1995).

The fact that dyslexia is found regardless of the language spoken has been carried out in various discussions regarding the study's observations, as given above. The requirement for a culturally-appropriate identification test for dyslexia in the Arabic language is supported by these observations. These also confirm that the key to successful provision of dyslexia is sufficient counselling and support services that centre on the individual needs. To give support to learners with SpLD, it is as vital to understand their experiences as to identify their needs.

Therefore the primary objective of this study has been to illustrate the requirement to recognize students' needs in addition to the provision of sufficient counselling services. The classroom observations suggested the inefficacy of the current framework of counselling as well as the social, emotional and academic complications of the students with dyslexia. These observations verify the need for a more specific support programme for the students with dyslexia. The requirement for the mechanisms of support to assist students with dyslexia in identifying their aims and goals is supreme to their success in education. The complications reported by the students with dyslexia in the classrooms are obvious in the following areas: the expression of ideas in writing; taking notes; organizing work; and understanding the procedures of exams. These academic problems can have a negative impact on self-esteem and self-confidence, especially when written work is criticized for poor

presentation, grammar, spelling and punctuation, which in turn have a negative impact on students with dyslexia.

Development of the support programmes for students with SpLD by the SEN teachers had the purpose of addressing the issue of avoiding the exclusion of students with dyslexia. SEN teachers provide appropriate teaching approaches as well as offering training in learning approaches, study expertise and time management, self-awareness and self-estimation. Positive outcomes were obtained from this programme of training. Advances in teaching have led to the improvement of academic and non-academic skills in the students with SpLD. The students with SpLD were able to improve their learning strategies, time management and self-estimation in the resource room.

6 IMPLICATIONS OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I analyse data in relation to Frith's model of understanding dyslexia, which I have intensively discussed in Chapter two. Data analysis particularly focuses on the teachers' advisors' and parents' perspectives regarding SpLD from two primary schools in one city in KSA. The data is from semi-structured interviews and policy documents. The research findings focus on predetermined themes generated from Frith's understanding of SpLD (Frith, 1995).

The chapter is divided into five main sections. The first section is the biological perspectives, including the medical terms of SpLD, which have been used by the participants or the policy documents. The second section is the cognitive perspective; the third section is the behavioural perspective; pedagogic strategies and cultural practices constituted environmental factors, which according to Frith (1995) act on all the three levels, the biological, cognitive and behavioural. Besides the themes identified from Frith's framework, themes emerging from the participants understanding of the causes of SpLD were also identified, since I asked the participants what they thought were the causes of SpLD. The participants' responses to the interview questions were used as a vehicle to explore their knowledge and beliefs about dyslexia in KSA. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the findings and a chapter summary.

Frith's model of understanding dyslexia (Frith, 1995) may have been influenced by her previous work in autism spectrum disorders and in neuro-cognitive approach to developmental disorders. According to Frith (1995: 6), her framework for understanding dyslexia was not a new theory about dyslexia but a shared framework. The framework was developed as an attempt to explain developmental disorders which Frith argues would require considering not only all the three levels of description: the biological, the cognitive and the behavioural (see Figure 1), but also the environmental influences on all these levels.

The choice of Frith's framework for understanding dyslexia for this study should not be construed to indicate that it is without criticism. Whilst Frith's model focused on the causes of dyslexia rather than how to support learners with dyslexia, there is evidence in literature that, the terms, definitions, manifestations, causes, and assessment of dyslexia have remained controversial for decades. For example, there are controversies over the discrepancy theory which posits that only children with average or above average IQ and struggle with reading are considered 'dyslexic' such that if a child has below average IQ and struggles with reading, then such a child is not considered 'dyslexic'. Another controversy relates to the learning styles and teaching methods appropriate for students with dyslexia with regard to whether they learn better through phonics, multisensory approach or a whole word approach.

Current definitions of dyslexia use the term 'disorder' (see section 3.7) which basically excludes children who may have dyslexia resulting from environmental factors such as socioeconomic disadvantages and poor educational background;

when it comes to assessment and support for children struggling with reading, such children are usually left out with total disregard of reading problems caused primarily by experiential and instructional deficits. Nonetheless, the controversies regarding the definitions, manifestations, causes, assessment of dyslexia, were inconsequential in this study since the main aim was to investigate the educational provision for children deemed to have dyslexia in the Saudi context.

Frith's 'causal model' (Frith, 1995) was adopted for this study to provide the baseline for understanding dyslexia considering the complex issues in the definitions of dyslexia. The framework (see Figure 7) was used to identify initial themes for data analysis and presentation. The process involved designing a theme map showing the patterns and relationships between themes as shown in Figure 8 below. Although data analysis was initially approached with specific themes drawn from Frith's causal model in mind; the biological, cognitive, behavioural and environmental factors, generally, grounded theory (Corbin and Strauss, 2008) approach for data analysis was adopted to identify new themes from the data and to be able to look at the phenomenon under investigation from different perspectives.

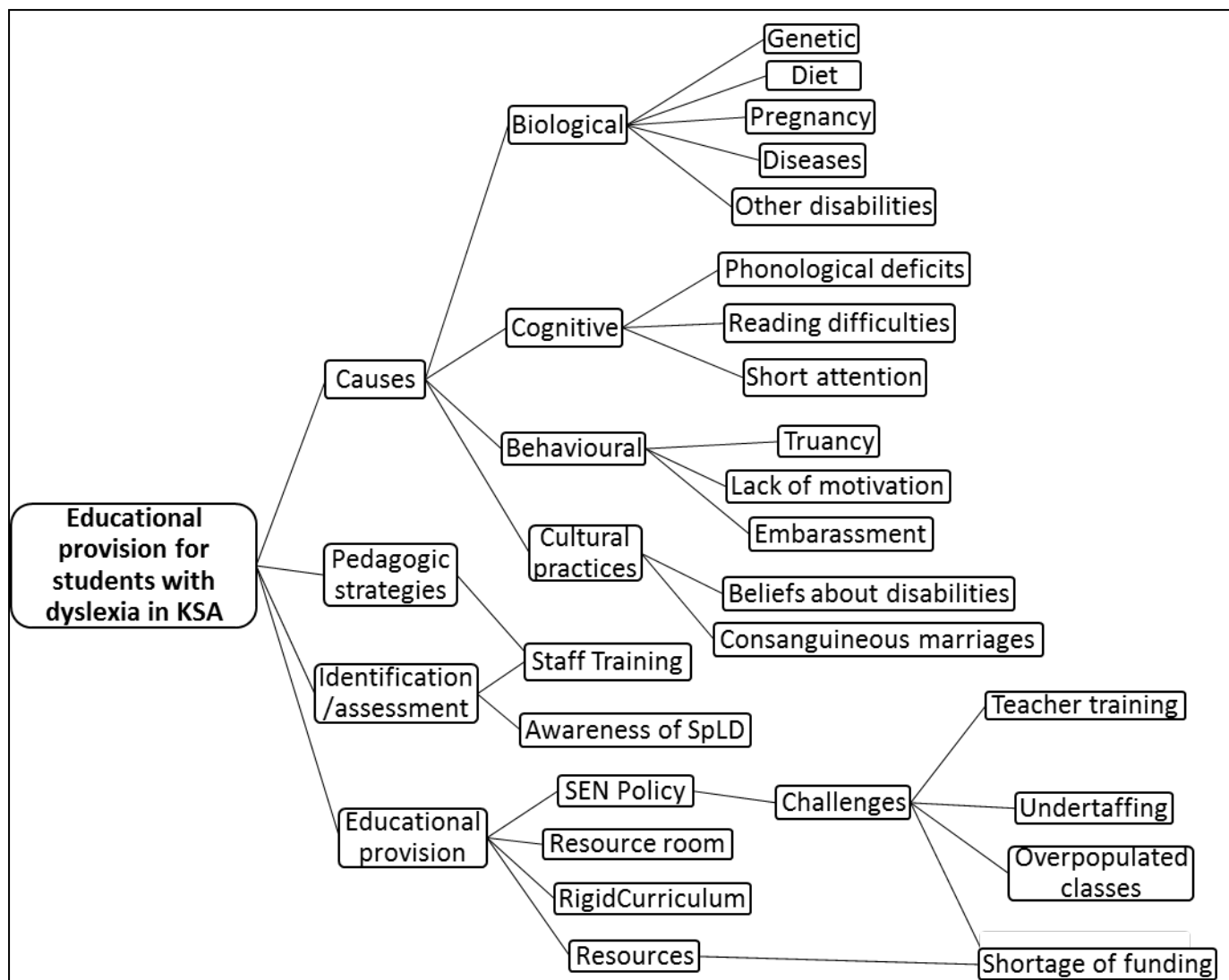


Figure 8: Thematic Map

6.2 Biological and medical perspective

Medical terms were mostly used by the participants to describe their understanding of SpLD. Some of the participants defined SpLD with a direct focus; while others indirectly highlighted their responses by using different medical terms for SpLD. To illustrate this theme, some specific responses were gathered from all the categories emerging from the participants' narratives. The study suggested that most of the participants, including classroom teachers, students and parents, were

not aware of the specific terms used in the definition of SpLD. The obtained or gathered outcomes have indicated that some of the participants were not aware of the definitions highlighted in Chapter three. The responses gathered to display this theme have been further categorized into sub-themes as discussed in this chapter.

In KSA, the most preferred term used for children with SpLD is ‘Learning Disabilities’. An informal discussion with a senior lecturer at a local university indicated that SpLD is considered as the major reason behind the poor performance of children in schools. SpLD is regarded as a ‘disorder’ with unique areas of difficulty, an etiology, a ‘diagnostic’ process and ‘treatment’. The statement below by the lecturer regarding her understanding of SpLD made the condition seem like a medical disorder, which consequently required ‘treatment’.

Learning Disabilities is a major reason children and adolescents might do poorly in school. It is a disorder with unique areas of difficulty, etiology, diagnostic process, and treatment. It is estimated that between five and ten percent of all students will have LD. As professionals, it is critical that you recognize the behaviours and clinical findings that would suggest such problems and that you know how to help parents as they seek the necessary evaluations to confirm the diagnosis and get appropriate interventions. Early recognition and intervention are critical. The price for the individual when these disorders are not recognized is significant and can last a lifetime (Statement from a senior lecturer at a local university).

In KSA, the MoE policy documents also regard SpLD as a ‘disorder’, but they do not say anything about its connection with the brain. The MoE has isolated ‘mental retardation’, sensory impairments, emotional/psychological disorders or socioeconomic conditions from the given causes of SpLD. The MoE indicates that the cause of SpLD is skills deficiencies or the disorders associated with certain literacy and mathematical skills. The discrepancy between ‘grade level and

achievement' is used to identify students with SpLD. From the definition given by the MoE, emphasis is given to three key points about students with SpLD, these include:

- The students are average or above average intelligence but their academic achievement is low,
- They do not have any other disabilities that can be a reason for SpLD,
- They need provision; however, the provision is excessively different from other SEN provisions.

The SEN policies in KSA focus on SpLD as a learning 'disorder', which implies that the biological and the cognitive perspectives are highly dominant on the language that is used in those policies. The SEN policy suggests that the approaches that are used in supporting students with SpLD aim at 'curing' rather than focusing on the prevention approaches. This trend used by the MoE further suggests that there are certain measures lacking in the society for controlling SpLD. These could be controlled or removed from the society with the help of adjustments to social practices that have been found to be the causes of such disabilities. The key points that were noted in the daily life problems in the society included the family planning system used by the families and also marriage between close relatives, who become the parents of children with SpLD.

Participants provided different reasons as the causes of SpLD, some of which were very contradictory. Some statements however offered a clear perspective about the issues faced by the people who have problems related with the reading, writing, doing basic maths or reading comprehension. The data from interviews with the participants seemed to avoid referring to students as having a disability and

labelling them since this would discourage them to make efforts to achieve their goals.

Data from this study and from the literature review shows that students with SpLD need acceptance and are not to be regarded as having health issues. They need to be made comfortable since failure to do that would just complicate their situation hence causing psychological problems for them. The data from interviews indicated that the reputation of the families of children with disability was adversely influenced by the society's perception of disability. Another participant listed concept in this area was the consanguinity of the parents of some children with disability and the situation where the birth process was difficult. In a situation where the parents were related this might had an impact on the child's health and might leave the traces in him or her in the form of disabilities.

6.2.1 Genetic factors

The findings of this study showed that genetic factors were generally considered as one of the causes of SpLD among the Saudi population. One of the participants stated that consanguinity could be one of the causes of disabilities including SpLD (Teacher 2, School2, Appendix 14: 206).

According to Parent 1 whose child was in School 1, the cause of her child's SpLD was hereditary. When I asked her what she thought were the causes of her child's difficulty with learning she stated that she had another child too who had 'mental retardation'.

Well, she has an older brother who suffers from mental retardation, when the school contacted us regarding this child's difficulties; her father and I were very concerned that she might have the same problem. But she was

different from her brother, when I revise with her she does not focus and get easily distracted, she has very little attention span (Parent 1, School 1, Appendix 15: 328).

In School 2 there was a trainee teacher whom as I interacted with the staff I asked her what she thought were the causes of SpLD and she stated that intermarriages among couples who were related could be attributed to high cases of SpLD in schools:

Relative marriage and genetics are the causes of diseases in families, such as heart diseases, high blood sugar, and some disabilities so I also think SpLD might be affected by relative marriages as well (Trainee Teacher in School 2).

Just as I stated earlier, I had an informal interview with a senior university lecture who also argued that heredity in Saudi Arabian families might cause a lot of diseases. She stated that the rate of first cousin marriage in KSA was very high and that might lead to some inherited diseases and disabilities in the Saudi society.

'In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, increased incidence of diabetes mellitus, hypertension, ischemic heart disease, and stroke are the major causes behind the hereditary diseases. The rate of first cousin marriage in KSA is very high; about %50 and as you know most of the genetic diseases are due to heredity and genetic factors (Statement from a Senior lecturer at a local university).

The interviews with the participants including the trainee teacher and the senior university lecturer indicated that there was a particular emphasis placed upon certain forms of marriages such as first cousin marriage, which is a common practice in KSA. The practice is however highly discouraged among people that were having any sort of consanguinity relationship as this has been traced as a

medically core reason behind ‘mental disorder’ or other diseases like heart disease, or diabetes in the children.

The issue of SpLD being hereditary featured quite prominently as one of the causes of dyslexia according to the participants. The majority of the participants had the opinion that heredity and genetic factors played a key role in causing dyslexia. For example, the student Advisor from School 1 pointed out that disability runs in families since some of these disabilities were caused by genetic factors (Appendix 13: 51). The student Advisor from School 2 also agreed that the causes were genetic, but she was of the opinion that nutrition and health issue were also considered as the causes of SpLD (Appendix 14: 204). The student Advisor from School 2 mentioned the environmental influences and the genetic factors as the major causes of SpLD.

6.2.2 Dyslexia as a disease

Diseases were also thought to be the causes of SpLD by the participants. Some teachers and parents in this study believed that SpLD was a result of health problems, including brain damage. Some of the statements by the participants indicated this problem as one of the causes for example, Teacher 2 from School 1 (Appendix 13: 53), Teacher 1 from School 2 (Appendix 14: 205), Parent 2 from School 1 (Appendix 15: 329), and Head Teacher from School 2 (Appendix 14: 202).

Brain damage was seen as a one of the contributors to SpLD. The data from the participants has indicated that classroom teachers felt that students with SpLD had something wrong with the brain. Some of them clearly indicated that the students

were 'stupid' because they did not understand their instructions in the classroom. And some used descriptions like 'different' 'lazy' and 'backward'.

It was observed that some classroom teachers felt that students with SpLD were unable to memorize things for longer durations because of cerebral complications. Some of them stated that the students were not stupid but made efforts to remember the all-important things in order to enhance the process of learning, but unfortunately, their minds did not work normally as compared to others (Teacher 2, School 1, Appendix 13: 95).

6.2.3 Dyslexia and pregnancy

Difficulties during pregnancy and in childbirth were also seen as possible causes of SpLD by the participants. For example, the Head Teacher in school 1 was of the opinion that in pregnant mothers ate or drunk something wrong that could affect the foetus which could result in having a child with SpLD (Appendix 13: 49).

From the Head Teacher's perceptions, it became clear that she felt that what happened during pregnancy and during childbirth had a lot of influence on the child's health. However, no significant studies were conducted to support this finding. It is therefore hard to conclusively argue that dyslexia has no link with the diet undertaken by mothers during pregnancy.

6.2.4 Dyslexia and food consumption

Various responses from the participants also exhibited the prominence of programmes of nutrition for the purpose of providing support to schools in dealing with students with SpLD. School 2 in the city where I was conducting my research

was a good example of such efforts. These nutritional programmes were also devised to meet the needs of the students with SpLD which was thought to influence the learning process. According to the experience shared by Student Advisor in School 2, students would bring unhealthy food to school which she discouraged to make sure that the students remained healthy (Appendix 14: 204).

The response from the Student Advisor in School 2 was also supported by other participants who also felt that malnutrition was also a contributor to SpLD and to poor performance in schools. For example, two participants in School 1 believed that malnutrition and junk food contributed to brain malfunction. SEN Teacher from School 1 believed that nutrition plays an important role in children's learning. According to her, children need vitamins to keep them active during the school day (Appendix 13: 50). Teacher 2 from School 1 also stated that some students in her school looked unhealthy and that the school did not provide healthy meals. She also thought that junk food might affect the brain development in children which could also be the cause of dyslexia (Appendix 13: 53).

From the responses of the participants, it was evident that according to them consumption of nutritious foods helped in reversing the students' difficulties in learning. The findings of this study further suggested the perspective of parents and classroom teachers that healthy food provides blood, organs, bones, muscles and brain nutrients. For example the Student Advisor in School 2 stated after they introduced a nutritional programme to a student who had anemia and that influenced her learning process. The nutritional programme includes dates, milk, and other healthy foods, after about a month and half, her academic performance

had significantly improved. The data indicated that the student had a health condition which affected her learning. After appropriate intervention the student performed well and overcome her difficulties. At the same time the data did not give any indication about the relationship between food consumption and SpLD as the student was not identified with SpLD in the first place.

6.2.5 Other disabilities

Although the MoE definition of SpLD rules out other disabilities as the causes of SpLD, data from some of the participants indicated that they believed that other disabilities were the causes of SpLD, while past studies have also placed strong focus on medical problems as the key reason behind poor school performance. The participants referred to these other difficulties as ‘physical impairments’ or ‘handicaps’. For example, when I asked the SEN Teacher in School 2 what she thought were the causes of SpLD, she believed that other disabilities could be the reason behind the difficulties faced by students with SpLD. The SEN Teacher strongly disagreed with the MoE’s definition of SpLD which excludes other disabilities as one of the causes of SpLD. She explained her view regarding this issue with an example of one child who was identified with SpLD but after several tests and after designing an IEP, she found that the child had a significant problem with eardrum, which made her experience reading or writing difficulties since she could not hear properly (Appendix 14: 203).

Another participant in School 1 had the same opinion that other conditions such as low vision were the causes of SpLD. Teacher 1 from School 1 thought that students

with SpLD might ‘suffer’ from low vision or hearing difficulties, which adversely affected their learning in general (Appendix 13: 52).

To conclude this section, from data gathered from the participants, there was some evidence that environmental factors may have an impact on the biological and medical perspectives just as argued in Frith’s theory for understanding dyslexia (Frith, 1995). Some of the participants viewed SpLD as a result of brain damage, as a genetic condition or as a disease. A biological basis was associated with cognitive deficits, behavioural issues and environmental issues. Other factors viewed as the causes of SpLD were difficult pregnancy, the food consumed, diseases, and malnutrition. The above findings have clearly indicated that biological factors can be attributed to SpLD. The research findings corresponded to the question about the understanding of dyslexia among professional and parents in regard to biological perspectives. It can be argued from the above findings that the participants have low levels of information regarding biological perspectives; similarly, the teachers were not clearly aware about the role of genetic factors, pregnancy, and other issues in the occurrence of SpLD.

6.3 The cognitive perspective

Literacy attainment correlates with many cognitive measures, as it involves the integration of complex cognitive skills. Strengths and weaknesses in various cognitive skills can be used to predict those children who are likely to experience difficulties in literacy development. Such children include those with low general ability, those from a disadvantaged social-economic background, those with limited experience of the language in which they are learning to read and write or those whose home experiences do not prepare them for learning or are not motivating.

The collected data has suggested that some of the participants, including teachers, have linked academic skills with the student's difficulties. Participants also raised some issues which according to them were the major reasons for the students' difficulties. The themes which are discussed in this section were derived from Frith's framework for understanding dyslexia.

Classroom teachers referred to the students' difficulties as difficulties in reading, writing and spelling. Likewise, mothers also identified their children's difficulties from their poor reading and writing skills. Head Teachers and the SEN Supervisor also raised important issues which were barriers to the students' learning. These barriers are also presented in this section because they were considered as important in understanding the cognitive perspective of dyslexia.

6.3.1 Phonological deficits

Among numerous difficulties faced by students with SpLD, one of the most significant themes that emerged from data concerned the phonological deficit. Due to the presence of phonological deficits among them, their ability to process and produce speech was decreased. They were not able to segment the stream of speech, and that sometimes resulted in involuntary errors. Moreover, from the data gathered from the four students involved in this study, it became clear that there were phonological deficits present among these children because each one of the signs highlighted by Frith (1995) in her framework and mentioned in Chapter two were evident. The four children from both primary schools involved in the study had difficulties in reading, writing and spelling.

6.3.2 Reading difficulties

Interview data from participants indicated that the difficulties in reading, writing and spelling were signs that a student could have SpLD. Most of the participants agreed that students with SpLD had problems related with reading, writing and spelling difficulties.

Reading difficulties were always considered as a major and noteworthy problem which was directly associated with the condition of dyslexia. Most of these students usually experience a significant number of reading difficulties because of dyslexia or learning problems. The SEN Teacher in School 1 explained the difficulties in writing and reading skills experienced by Cd1 and Cd2 (Appendix 13: 92).

The response of the SEN Teacher in School 1 shows that the two students with SpLD faced difficulties in reading since they lacked basic skills. However, the SEN teacher suggested various strategies to overcome these difficulties. It was also found from the data that Cd1 and Cd2 from School 1 had a fear of punishment that usually resulted in the occurrence of poor reading skills. It was also found that they had reduced self-confidence and self-esteem directly associated with the occurrence of reading problems. Most of the children with SpLD may also experience certain difficulties in finding differences between homogeneous words. The SEN Teacher from School 2 had a similar viewpoint. She was also asked about the extent of certain difficulties which are directly associated with the occurrence of reading among students with SpLD in particular with Cd1 and Cd2 from School 2. From her data, there was an indication that the reading skills were amongst certain

significant capabilities that were directly associated with improved personal and professional attributes (Appendix 14: 305).

Reading skills always play a significant role in the learning within schools. The data has also showed that the four students with SpLD in this study had reading problems because of their difficulties. Therefore, proper training was required for better understanding about the techniques for reading. The SEN Teacher in School 2 had more to say with regard to difficulties in reading (Appendix 14: 197).

The children with SpLD studied lacked such abilities in regard to reading comprehension. At the same time, some students with SpLD including Cd1 and Cd2 from School 2 lacked the ability to distinguish between the words and letters of similar origin or pronunciation. However, in this study the Teacher 2 in School 2 identified similar outcomes that Cd1 from School 2 lacked the ability to perceive environmental factors in order to enhance their reading skills.

Reading, writing and spelling are the most faced difficulties by Cd1 and other students with SpLD...also the adaption with the surrounding environment is one of their difficulties as students with SpLD have difficulties to engage with other students in the classroom or to get involved in some classroom activities such as reading activities (Teacher 2, School 2, Appendix 14: 248).

Auditory perception also plays a valuable role in literacy learning. Ability to hear sounds clearly certainly helps in the development of literacy skills. The data collected from The SEN Teacher in School 2 also suggested that they too considered auditory perception as vital for literacy learning. For example she clearly stated that inappropriate auditory perceptions have a close relationship with the occurrence of reading difficulties (Appendix 14: 197).

The collected data presented that backward reading of certain letters or words was strongly connected with appropriate ability of the students. However, reading difficulties might limit the capabilities of students with SpLD to read similar words or letter in backward motion.

Teacher 1 in School 1 also believed that problems with vision and hearing would also contribute to SpLD (Appendix 13: 52). Besides the teachers, the mothers also had the opinion that their children had some reading difficulties. Parent 2 from School 1 noticed that her daughter did not like to read from books but she could learn her lessons by heart (Appendix 15: 326).

The four students with SpLD that were involved in the study had difficulties with phonics; this was observed during lessons in the classroom and in the resource rooms. I also observed that the students with SpLD had poor spelling skills and that they also had problems in the understanding of the meaning of words see (Appendix 23.1). The students were also found to have difficulties in understanding instructions or in following more than one instruction at the same time; this is also discussed in this section. From the research findings it can be concluded that these students were afraid to express themselves in speaking or reading, hence affecting their self-esteem since they felt embarrassed when their classroom teachers asked them to read in front of their classmates. Just as noted earlier, there was an association between the difficulties in reading, writing and spelling with psychological disorders, leading to greater academic complications.

6.3.3 Writing difficulties

When I asked teachers how they determine whether a student has SpLD the SEN Teacher in School 1 stated that difficulties in writing and spelling were one of the indicators (Appendix 13: 44).

From the statement from the SEN Teacher it was evident that Cd1 and Cd2 from School 1 usually experienced significant difficulties in writing and spelling due to lack of basic writing skills. At the same time, the two students lacked the ability to control their muscles to be able to control their handwriting. The lack of basic writing skills also influenced maths computation, and drawing geometrical shapes, as noted by the teachers. Teacher 1 in School 2 had the same sentiments regarding the difficulties the student with SpLD in her classes was facing (Appendix 14: 199).

From the interview with Teacher 1 in School 2, it was evident that teachers considered other disabilities such as fine motor coordination, which affects functions such as holding a pen properly when writing, as one of the challenges faced by students with SpLD as well. It has been further found that the development of skills for holding the pen correctly was strongly connected with better writing skills. After analyzing data from classroom teachers across the two schools, it can be said that the teachers considered poor writing skills as adversely had influenced the learning progress for students with SpLD. For example Teacher 2 from School 1 stated that she could not read what Cd1 wrote due to poor handwriting.

Teacher 2, School 1

[Q]How do you determine that a student could be having SpLD? From their exam sheets, and during the exams as well. When I ask Cd1 to write, she

does not write something readable; she scratches some words, which I cannot read (Appendix 13: 47).

During the interviews, I was shown some of the students' work by the teachers to see myself what they meant when they said the writing was illegible. The problem according to the teachers had influenced the students especially during lessons which required dictation see (Appendix 23.1) for some of the students' spelling tests.

Findings from this study confirmed teachers' views regarding the difficulties in writing faced by the students with SpLD from both schools. Additionally, data collected from classroom teachers from School 2 indicated that Arabic grammar could possibly be a contributing factor to SpLD – unfortunately much of the literature does not put emphasis on the effect of languages like Arabic when investigating the causes of dyslexia or in trying to understand dyslexia.

Teacher 2, School 2

...specifically some difficulties in literacy like the difference between some Arabic grammar terms, like 'Al' alqamaria and 'Al' alshamsia, the Arabic vowels and poor spelling skills (Appendix 14: 248).

Another issue which emerged from the data was that the classroom teachers stated that the students with SpLD had difficulties in finding answers from texts; they also found it difficult to solve problems of Arabic literacy. Teachers also stated that the students were not able to respond to the general questions asked in the classroom (Teacher 1, School 1, Appendix 13: 100).

The data from this study suggested that students with SpLD could display varying level of difficulties in different subjects. Classroom teachers from School 2 stated

that the students were able to improve their levels of reading and writing with extra support from the resource room, but for the subject of Arabic literacy, the problem was consistent in both the general and specific difficulties (Appendix 14: 241-242).

6.3.4 Short-term memory

Short-term memory was another challenge highlighted by the participants, the pupils that were interviewed stated that they usually found themselves regularly forgetting what they were taught the previous day in school. For example, Cd1 in School 1 said that she had difficulties doing homework because she could not remember the instructions given by the teachers in school (Appendix 18: 497).

Both the classroom teachers and the SEN teachers from both schools claimed that students with SpLD had difficulties specifically in connection to the rapid recall of information. Teacher 2 from School 1 stated that Cd1 had difficulties in remembering what was learnt in class and always forgot information very quickly. The teacher also pointed out that Cd1 had poor memory such that the student kept forgetting simple instructions. The classroom teacher linked such difficulties with memory, and information processing. She specifically linked the difficulties with academic learning only such that the student could not remember the information that were related to lessons but not so much with personal information or day to day life (Appendix 13: 95).

The SEN Teacher in School 2 also stated that one of the challenges she was facing in supporting the students with SpLD was that they would easily forget what they were taught. For instance, she had this to say about Cd1 and Cd2:

SEN Teacher, School 2

Also they have short-term memory problems and I always try to focus on their weaknesses by using their strengths. For example, when I revise with Cd1 and Cd2 some lessons that they took in the past, they hardly remember them. I think they do not get enough support from their parents, if their parents make follow ups at home they would be better and they would remember their lessons (Appendix 14: 245).

Lack of follow-up by parents featured as one of the reasons why the students with SpLD continued performing poorly at school, since they easily forgot what was learnt and therefore needed extra support, even at home. This is an environmental issue, as some parents did not focus on creating a learning environment within their homes. Further, evidence of short-term memory problems was noted from the response of the SEN Teacher of School 2. She pointed out students easily forgot what she taught them in the resource room which made her use a multisensory approach to enhance memory. The resource room was divided into five corners for the purpose of the development of the attention of students, and to boost memory as a result of the use of a variety of teaching approaches. The teacher assigned the corners to the students as they preferred, for the purpose of providing them both with a comfort, and the use of resources they were interested in (Appendix 14: 233).

During the interview with SEN Teacher in School 1 she explained to me the methods she used. She also stated that she used the multisensory approach in the resource room in order to improve the students' short-term memory. From the response by the SEN Teacher in School 1, it was evident that stories serve as great way for boosting memory since the students found the stories interesting. According to her the children's brains grow by hearing stories and therefore they

are able to retain the information conveyed through stories in their mind (Appendix 13: 80).

The SEN Teacher in School 2 on the other hand allowed her students to follow their own rules for learning in their corners. According to her statement which can be found in Appendix 14:233, when the students are provided with particularly designed and created spaces, they can easily memorize the information. Resource room observation shed further light on the value of multisensory approaches to boost the students' sense for identifying things and describing them.

Both the classroom teachers' as well as SEN teachers' views regarding short term memory were that both the teachers and the parents were responsible for enhancing the students' short term memory if the students were to improve in learning. SEN teachers also pointed out the role of effective guidance in strengthening students' memory.

6.3.5 Short attention span

Short attention span was identified by the participants as another memory problem in the students with dyslexia. For example, from the responses of the Head Teachers, I noted that they both felt that students with SpLD lacked adequate learning abilities, due to failure pay attention in classrooms during lessons. As a result of lack of attention, these students did not perform well in exams and tests. They further stated that it would be difficult for the child to write what the teacher is instructing because of lack of attentiveness in the class, hence leading to poor performance (Appendix 13: 31) (Appendix 14: 202).

According to the teachers and from personal observation, there was a higher level of concentration in the resource rooms as compared to the regular classrooms. The resource room environment contributed vitally in drawing the attention of the students. In this environment, the teachers' contributions and the absence of distracting elements play a vital role in learning. Additional lessons in the resource room encouraged SEN teachers to devote all their efforts to students with SpLD individually. In the regular classroom, there were many factors, including other students, which distracted students with SpLD. These things diverted their attention and they were not able to focus or concentrate on the lessons. Classroom Teacher 1 from School 1 shared her experience on this issue.

... Cd2 doesn't concentrate and doesn't pay any attention. This means that I always put her in the front so that she is close to me (Teacher 1, School 1, Appendix 13: 46).

The response of the teacher in the above statement showed that student with SpLD was less attentive in classrooms during the lessons. The lack of attentiveness may become quite difficult for students with SpLD to learn and write what teachers are instructing. Teacher 2 from School 1 also stated that Cd1 were easily distracted and did not concentrate during lessons. However, when she was provided with the opportunity to learn one-to-one, she seemed to pay attention to the lesson and seemed to understand better. The teacher also noted that the student had a memory problem which was related to the way their brain functioned. The teacher complained that the student did not focus on lessons and forgot everything by next day (Appendix 13: 101).

The parents of the students with SpLD had the same sentiments regarding their children. The mother of Cd1 from School 1 stated that she was aware that her child had poor memory, and her attention span was quite low. She also felt that teaching her daughter on a one-to-one basis would be better, so that she was not distracted by the rest of the students (Appendix 15: 346 and 16: 397).

The lack of confidence was also connected with the poor memory. The fact that the student could not remember what was previously taught made them get nervous during lessons for fear that they might be asked questions by the teachers during revision and fail to get it right like the majority of the students.

6.3.6 Understanding problems

During the interviews with classroom teachers, they highlighted understanding problems that students with SpLD faced. The teachers said that students with SpLD did not understand questions in the classroom; they also did not understand instructions, especially during the exams. Understanding is always required in the classroom settings in order to provide information for effective learning. The data indicates that students with dyslexia frequently exhibit other learning and adjustment problems with regard to physical skills, problem solving skills, self-management, social adjustment, and motivation. For example, Teacher 2 in School 1 had this to say when I asked her what challenges she faced having students with SpLD in her class:

Teacher 2, School 1

The other problem that I face with the students with SpLD is that they seem not to understand what I teach, even simple instructions and questions, they don't follow my instructions, I think they don't concentrate when I ask them

questions and possibly that is why they don't understand me (Appendix 13: 101).

Data from the classroom observations also indicated that the students had difficulties understanding the questions. For example, when I was observing Cd2 from School 1 in her classroom, she was asked '*When you wake up in the morning what is the first thing you do?*' the student took quite a long time to reply. She seemed to be like someone who was thinking about a question which was very difficult. The classroom teacher repeated the question again but the student did not answer. The teacher shouted at the student repeating the question for the third time then the student said, '*I go to the farm with my dad,*' she answered with low voice, then the teacher said to her she did not ask what the student did at the weekend (Appendix 21.3, Classroom Field Notes).

The example above indicated that the student was unable to understand the meaning of the lesson because her focus was not on the lesson otherwise she could have been replied correctly. It was observed that the student was sleepy as her eyes were closing and she was yawning during the lessons. Her teacher kept complaining that the student always slept during the lessons (Appendix 21.3, Classroom Field Notes). Additionally, the interview with the student's mother seemed to indicate that the student used to go to bed very late and she did not have her breakfast in the morning (Appendix 15: 314).

From this information, it can be argued on the basis of the literature review in chapter three that all these issues are capable of placing negative impact on the cognition and memory of the students with SpLD which could be the reason why

this particular student could not focus or understand most of what was being taught in the classroom.

It can be further argued on the basis of the data collected in this study and the literature review that pressure from the classroom teachers can also be one of the reasons behind the understanding of problems faced by students with SpLD. Excessive pressure might result in the occurrence of reduced understanding level of children. It is further mentioned that learning difficulties in single word decoding are often unexpected; however, these difficulties are not the outcomes of generalized developmental disability. During the process when a child is recalling information in his or her memory, teacher's pressure can disturb the entire process. Unfortunately, most teachers considered it as the right strategy. During my observation I had a talk with Teacher 1 from School 1, I asked her that why she kept putting a lot of pressure on Cd2 in her class who had SpLD? She said that *'it is because the student keeps falling asleep during lessons so when I ask her questions from time to time she would not sleep, that would keep her awake'* (Appendix 21.3, Classroom Field Notes).

Students' point of view was also important for understanding the entire situation. For example, Cd2 from School 1 felt uncomfortable and stressed due to the way classroom teachers dealt with her in the classrooms. When I asked her the difference between the regular classroom and the resource room her response indicated that physical elements of the regular classroom were not motivating (Appendix 18: 525).

The responses of Cd2 from School 1 indicated that the students with SpLD faced challenges in understanding most of what was taught during lessons. Teacher expectations may be a factor in the education and achievement of students with SpLD. It was noted that Teacher 1 from School 1 expected that pressure might help the student and keep her awake during the lessons. However, the approach the teacher followed in the classroom influenced the student's behaviour and her achievement. While in the resource room the student behaved differently due to the different learning environment and the approaches used.

6.4 Behavioural perspective

In this section I focus on behavioural perspectives and the influence of environmental factors based on Frith's framework for understanding dyslexia. The interview questions led the classroom teachers to raise new themes with regard to behaviour exhibited in the classrooms and in the resource room. The teachers talked about how students with SpLD behaved towards certain issues like attending or avoiding the classes, the students' attitudes toward the resource room, and the negligence of parents or of the students themselves. There were also some themes which were drawn from the literature review as well as from the data. These included referring to, students with SpLD as 'lazy' or 'not willing to study' and as 'having low self-esteem'. In addition, the parents who were interviewed suggested themes such as the effects of family reading behaviours at home and the children's reading practice and habits.

6.4.1 Lazy / Not willing to study

This theme was mainly drawn from the literature review and from the data gathered during interviews. When the classroom teachers were asked about their feelings towards students with SpLD, they described them as 'lazy', 'not willing to study' and demotivated individuals.

As I discussed in Chapter two, section 2.2.3 that dyslexia is perceived as being caused by 'laziness' and lack of effort. Teachers and parents may view their otherwise intelligent students' lack of success as due to lack of effort. From the analysed data it can be noted that classroom and school environment significantly influence on the difficulties of SpLD. During the interview with SEN teachers, I realized that the school practices were not aligned according to the education ministry policies. Teachers' attitude towards students with SpLD was quite shocking, despite the fact that they knew the ability level of such children. The influence of culture can be traced back on the classroom attitudes and teachers. This can be evidenced from the statements from classroom teachers, according to SEN Teacher from School 1:

I remember when I started working in this school some teachers talked to me about some students who called 'lazy' they asked me to take them into my programme because those students were not doing anything in the classroom (SEN Teacher, School 1, Appendix 13: 98).

These remarks regarding students with SpLD being seen as lazy only featured from the data gathered from the teachers; the parents who were interviewed did not consider children with SpLD as lazy. Teachers' perspective of children with SpLD as being lazy could be attributed to lack of knowledge regarding SpLD and

inadequate training in SEN. It is highly important to consider the behavioural perspective in order to assess the instructors' ability and understanding regarding the exploratory and thoughtful information regarding SpLD. Without a proper level of awareness and capability, teachers and instructors will not be able to change their behaviours.

The perception of students with SpLD as being lazy was also noted in School 2. When I asked the SEN Teacher in School 2 what challenges the students with SpLD faced she stated that students with SpLD were stigmatized by referring to them as lazy (SEN Teacher, School 2, Appendix 14: 245). Data from classroom teachers indicated that they were quick to label children with SpLD from a behavioural perspective such as laziness, acting out, ignoring, bullying, fidgeting and distractibility while they overlooked the underlying causes of the behaviour. From the responses of SEN teachers in both schools, it was evident that the lack of knowledge and negative attitude towards learners with SpLD greatly de-motivated the students. The head teachers also confirmed that classroom teachers lacked knowledge on dealing with students with SpLD.

From the response of Head Teacher from School 1 (Appendix 13: 127), it was evident that classroom teachers lack the knowledge on how to deal with students with SpLD. Therefore the school has organized special arrangements for these students. Moreover the Head Teacher highlighted that the impolite behaviour of the classroom teachers towards students with SpLD lowered the self-esteem of the students. As a result of the teachers' attitude towards students with SpLD, other students also get the courage to make negative remarks about them. Such negative

behaviours of the classroom teachers and students create further the difficulties for the students with SpLD. The academic success is totally dependent upon the positive and optimistic behaviours of teachers.

Classroom teachers have contributed to the behaviours of students with SpLD, because they too describe themselves as 'lazy'. The discrimination between the provisions of the classroom teachers compared with the resource room teacher encourages students with SpLD to believe that they are 'lazy' or different from others.

The four students from both schools considered themselves as 'lazy' because the SEN Teacher used to take them to the resource room due to their difficulties with reading and writing (Appendix 18: 536-537 and 19: 596-597). Obviously, the students with SpLD were convinced that they were irresponsible, lazy or stubborn because they were unable to do what they were asked to do and often forget to perform household chores or failed to follow a series of instructions.

However, it can be argued that it was very wrong that classroom teachers made the children associate these difficulties with laziness. The children were made to believe that only 'lazy students' were registered in the support programme for students with SpLD and were taught in the resource room. The students stated that their colleagues also openly called them 'lazy student' and said that was why they were taken to the resource room.

Due to their reading and writing difficulties, such behaviours towards students with SpLD students were quite demoralizing. I found that the students with SpLD

actually preferred the SEN teachers because of the support and encouragement they were getting (Appendix 18: 524-525) (Appendix 19: 593-594).

Apart from behavioural issues in the school's learning environment, lack of family and parental support also played a vital role in the learning of the students. One of the parents that I interviewed discussed this issue as the reason for not sending her child to kindergarten and not paying attention to her at home.

Parent 1, School 1

Before my daughter enters the primary school I never tried to teach her. She never held a pencil. Also we did not send her to kindergarten so we did not know about her difficulties in reading and writing until she went to primary school (Appendix 15: 325).

Observation findings also confirmed some students were not willing to support students with SpLD in the classroom or talk to them. The students complained that the students with SpLD were copying answers from them.

During the interviews students with SpLD stated that the classroom teacher shouted at them in front of classmates. Despite knowing that they had difficulty in reading, teachers usually asked them to read in front of the class. Cd2 from School 1 said that her teacher puts lots of pressure on her (Appendix 18: 534). Those students were called 'lazy', 'poor', 'negligent students' because of their poor performance in learning. I noted that teachers blamed parents for such problems while parents also had same perspectives and they thought that lots of care from them might affect the behaviours of their children towards studying. One of the parents argued that her daughter's grandmother was the one who 'spoiled' her, by providing her with everything she needed (Appendix 15: 320).

What the teachers ought to realise before labelling students as lazy or saying that they do not put effort is that most people who are deemed lazy may not be intrinsically lazy, factors such as lack of motivation, fear, hopelessness and low self-esteem may be the contributing factors. Behaviourist theorists, argue that most behaviour is a result of learning processes. John B. Watson who is widely known for his studies in behaviourism believed that people's behaviour, whether good or bad could be explained by learning experiences (Watson, 1930; Wicks-Nelson and Israel, 2003). Another proponent of behaviourism, Edward Lee Thorndike emphasized on reinforcement in learning; he came up with the 'The law of Effect', which states that behaviour is shaped by its consequences. If the consequence is satisfying, the behaviour will be strengthened in the future; if it is uncomfortable, the behaviour will be weakened (Ayers et al., 2000). Looking at what teachers termed as laziness from a psychological perspective, it can be argued that some actions by the teachers, for example, asking students with dyslexia to read in class which the students found embarrassing, and the continues poor performance in class may have contributed the behaviour which teachers termed as laziness.

6.4.2 Absence / avoiding schools

This theme was mainly drawn from the data gathered from the interviews with the classroom teachers and SEN teachers who talked about the students' behaviours. Students with SpLD seem to be more withdrawn as compared to their peers. At the same time, children with SpLD are also victimized either by their teachers or bullied by their fellow students (Appendix 18: 530-531) (Appendix 19: 590-591).

Head Teacher from School 1 stated that some of the students with SpLD avoid attending some classes because they hated some subjects or the classroom teachers (Appendix 13: 91). The teachers from School 1 also blamed the parents for not supporting the students at home; the students were generally dependent on the SEN teacher (Appendix 13: 101). The teachers stated that some students with SpLD avoided some classes, especially when they were told about the whole class assessment on a particular day (Appendix 13: 100). Some students stated they actually hated school and avoided school when there were dictation, recitation or literacy lessons (Appendix 18: 504) (Appendix 19: 563).

During the interview with the teachers they confirmed some students would occasionally be absent during literacy lessons, which according to them was a deliberate action to avoid attending literacy classes. The students plainly said that they hated school and some teachers who made them feel like not attending school. Some of the reasons given by the students for hating school were that the teachers embarrassed them by asking them to read in class in front of their classmates.

Children in School 1

Cd1 S1	I hate reading, writing, spelling and Arabic literacy. I can't spell the words. I just can't remember them. The classroom teacher gives us very difficult words. I hate doing homework, I don't have time to do it at home and sometimes I feel upset doing it. Sometimes the homework is very difficult and I can't do it myself, and in general I hate doing it at home.
Cd2 S1	I hate reading and writing, the classroom teacher forces me to read in front of my classmates. I hate it because I can't read like them. This makes me feel very embarrassed.

Appendix 18: 497-498

Children in School 2

Cd1 S2	I feel embarrassed because I read like small children. I hate to read in front of them. I sometimes try to hide myself during the reading session because I don't want my classroom teacher to pick me and ask me to read aloud.
Cd2 S2	Sometimes I feel sad when my friends refuse to help me or even don't allow me to work with them in the group activities. I feel embarrassed when the classroom teacher asks me a question and I cannot give the correct answer.

Appendix 19: 599-600

The parents who were interviewed also confirmed that their children had school avoidance issues. The study indicated that after finishing school, Cd2 from School 1 used to sleep in the afternoon for long hours and stay awake late at night. Her parent also stated that her child hated studying at home. Also she said that her daughter would shout at her when she was preparing books for revision, and she would refuse to study. The parent said that she usually got very angry with her daughter and quite often she felt like punishing her (Appendix 15: 332).

From the interview with the above parent, it was evident that the problem was not just at school but also at home; the parents however blamed each other for their child's failure. For example, the parents believed the reason behind such behavioural issues, according to her mother, was that she left her grandmother whom she loved the most and was very close to her. The child lived with her grandmother since she was three months old and continued living with her until she was seven years old such that she was not taken to school until at the age of seven unlike her peers who joined kindergarten at the age of six. During my interview with the child, she expressed her hatred for her classroom teacher and learning in general. The child indicated that despite knowing that she had problems in reading

and writing, the teachers continually taunted her during lessons whenever she made a mistake.

The above scenario reveals a situation where instead of the parents and teachers supporting the child, they resulted in blame game for the causes of the child's poor performance in school. Constant punishment at home and ridiculing at school may have impacted negatively on the child's self-esteem which may consequently have resulted in behavioural problems. Additionally, the reasons behind such spoilt behaviour and weakened learning abilities within the child were also her parents' negligence and lack of awareness about the actual problem with their child. This can be evidenced from the following statement by one of the parents.

Parent 1, School 1

I was very concerned and scared when her school contacted us and told us that she needed to be registered in the SpLD programme in her school. At the beginning we refused, because we thought that programme is for stupid students and she is not stupid she understands but we did not pay attention to her at home (Appendix 15: 331).

From the case of Cd2, it can be argued here that the family's attitude and behaviour towards their child in dealing with her like a small baby and 'spoiling' her by meeting all her needs resulted in the increase in the level of difficulty for such children. It can be argued from the interviews with Parent 2 from School 1 who was 45 years old with only primary educational level qualification, she was a homemaker and the large family size of six children was the biggest concern that stopped her in giving equal attention to every child. Due to family burden, one of the children (Cd2) from School 1 lived with her grandmother who loved her so much. Her mother further added that she and her sister were twins and born as

normal children. They did not have any problem during their growth. However, her grandmother 'spoilt' her by never refusing her orders (Appendix 15: 320).

From this conversation, it can be noted that late school enrolment or not going to school at the proper age could be the reason behind the child's behavioural problems of non-attending the issues. Due to late admission, Cd2 from School 1 failed in her second grade and was not able to cope up with her studies like her twin (Appendix 15: 317-320).

Besides the data from the interviews, the findings from the participants also confirmed some of the attitudes stated by the participants. I noted that Cd2 from School 1 whom the mother was referring as 'spoilt' was missed five lesson in the regular classrooms. However, what really drew my attention towards this child's behaviour was the fact that she did not miss her lessons with the SEN teacher in the resource room. I always observed her presence in the resource room sessions. The incidence points out on the significance of different classroom teachers and SEN teachers' behaviours towards the SpLD students that direct the positive or negative attitudes of such students towards the learning process.

Dyslexia is often unrecognized, misinterpreted, or even results in the child being punished by others. These behaviours have strong impact on the SpLD students' behaviours. This is the reason why the same child with same difficulty level responded differently in two different situations i.e. in classroom and in resource room. This particular child herself accepted during interview that she liked her SEN teacher because she gave her gifts. She described the SEN teacher as very nice and kind with her. It can also be argued that the presence of things and objects that

improved her attention in the resource room encouraged the student to attend all the SEN lessons (Appendix 18: 534).

In summary, it can be argued that all the participants involved within the learning process of the children with SpLD must first assess their individual behaviours before examining the behavioural aspects of the children with SpLD.

6.4.3 Embarrassment

Just like the above two themes, another theme extracted from the literature review and from the data was related with the students' embarrassment. During the interview conducted with the students, it was found that this is also one of the behavioural perceptive, which indicates the presence of SpLD within the student. In Chapter two, section 2.2.3 I discussed that children with SpLD usually show lower self-esteem and confidence as compared to students without SpLD. The children in this study also showed low self-esteem and lack of confidence (Appendix 18: 498-504) (Appendix 19: 599-600).

According to Tangney (1999), embarrassment is a self-conscious emotion, which occurs without exception in the company of other people. Lewis (1992) cited in Tangney (1999:555) distinguished two types of embarrassment - embarrassment due to exposure and embarrassment due to negative self-evaluation, he argues that the former emerges early in life and does involve any apparent negative self-evaluation. Some theorists believe that the root of embarrassment is negative evaluation by others. People who are prone to embarrassment tend to be highly aware of and concerned with social rules and standards such that embarrassment occurs when explicit social roles are disrupted, and social interactions go awry.

Research also suggest that frequent and excessive episodes of embarrassment may put people at risk for other social and emotional difficulties (Tangney, 1999).

This study revealed that students with SpLD did not like to read because they felt embarrassment in the class, since they were not able to read and write like their peers. The teachers put pressure on them to read in front of the class, which strengthened their deviant behaviours such as staying away from school. The implementation of different learning methods by SEN Teacher in School 1 supports the children in overcoming their embarrassment problems, rather than making them feel more embarrassed, like the strategies used by the classroom teachers. Additionally, parents' negligence was also noted from the interviews with the parents who failed to recognize the reasons behind the children's dislike for school.

Poor academic performance usually results in feelings of inferiority, which also affect other factors such as self-confidence (Riddick, 1996). In my observation during the reading lessons I noted that the students with SpLD could not speak up, to the extent that I could not hear when they were reading. The classroom teachers kept asking them to read aloud. From what I observed I noted that the students were afraid to read aloud due to lack of confidence, and the fear of getting embarrassed since they could not read like their peers in class. Such students avoid using a high voice when reading or making eye contact with the classroom teacher during lessons, so that the teachers could not pick them to read. For example, I noted that one of students with SpLD never had eye contact with her teacher throughout a reading lesson I was observing. I noted that none of the four students that I was observing volunteered to read in class. The teachers, however, did nothing to

remove the embarrassing feelings from the students with SpLD. Students with SpLD were always afraid of the teachers and their peers since they were unsupportive and always criticized them for poor reading (Appendix 21.6, Classroom Field Notes).

Such attitudes, along with the supportive role of SEN teacher in dealing with such issues, were confirmed during the interviews with the SEN teachers. For example, SEN Teacher from School 1 had this to say about supporting students with SpLD:

My job is to motivate them and support them. I always encourage them to read and I use the computer to help them. Some students really like reading from the computer, but some like to highlight the texts with different colours. Some of them ask me to rewrite some texts in their notebooks and highlight the difficult words or write them in cards with big font. It is very important to know their preferred method of reading so I try to help them. Some classroom teachers do not understand their situations, forcing them to read a text, and that makes their difficulties even worse. The classroom teacher needs to assess the students with SpLD appropriately and reward every small effort they make. Some teachers don't consider the efforts students with SpLD make, so instead of rewarding that they just give them zero marks. The students hate reading because they have not been encouraged to read so that they can love reading (SEN Teacher , School 1, Appendix 13: 86).

The SEN Teacher in School 2 had similar sentiments regarding the issues that embarrass students with SpLD during lessons. According to her, lack of proper reading resources and the absence of a library discourage students towards reading. In dealing with such issues, she had created a library corner in the resource room where all the students had the chance to read, based on the designed timetable for reading sessions. Every week she called four to six students with SpLD along with other students without SpLD. They would then be given a chance to read the story they liked. Pair reading is used where first non-SpLD students are given the chance

to read while the students with SpLD listen. After that the students with SpLD were encouraged to read while their colleagues listened to them (Appendix 14: 251).

From these examples, it was very clear that there were improper support methods for improving the reading levels of the students, which would consequently improve their self-esteem since they would stop getting embarrassed in class. Although the SEN teachers in both schools made great efforts from their side to deal with students' embarrassment, unfortunately the classroom teachers were not equally supportive. They did not take any effort to support the students with SpLD, which sometimes made the work done by the SEN teachers futile. This can be evidenced from the interview with Teacher 1 from School 1. During the interview the teacher kept talking negatively about the students' behaviour during reading sessions. She suggested the use of different curriculums and different classes for teaching such students so that they were separated from the rest (Appendix 13: 130) (Appendix 13: 136).

6.4.4 Organization and homework

From the interviews and observation data, organization and homework emerged as important themes from the behavioural perspective. There is evidence from various studies that students with SpLD face problems with their completing their homework provided by the teachers. Appropriate educational support would be significant for the individuals with dyslexia, to address their reading and writing difficulties.

Although neither the classroom teachers nor the SEN teachers stated the children with SpLD possibly had other conditions such as dyspraxia, some of the challenges the children were facing, for example, having poor organizational skills and clumsiness could have been a result of dyspraxia as well. Such children generally find it challenging to read and write as expected for their age; such that they are sometimes thought of as 'lazy' by both the parents and the teachers for failing to complete assignments. For instance, one of the students was quoted saying that she hated to do homework (Appendix 18: 497).

The student also stated that her classroom teacher always left comments with red pen on her notebook when she got something wrong or she did not put down an answer, which she found quite annoying (Child 1 School 1, Appendix 18: 533). During the interview some students stated that they failed to complete tasks written on the board because they were not able to read clearly what was written on the board (Child 1, School 1, Appendix 18: 524) (Child 1, School 2, Appendix 19: 584) (Child 2, School 2, Appendix 19: 585).

The teachers complained that the students had organizational problems such that they kept misplacing their items. The four students with SpLD would sometimes forget to bring some of their books or they would come to school without their pencil cases such that the teacher had to provide them with the writing materials. Their handwriting, according to the teachers were also messy and illegible as compared to the rest of the students without SpLD. This was further confirmed from the interview of the SEN Teacher in School 1. When I asked her what

challenges students with SpLD faced in the school, one of her responses was that they have problems associated with organizational skills.

Students with SpLD are sometimes messy and confused, they need to learn some techniques about how they can organise their stuff or how they can make their work tidy like using different colours in their notebooks (SEN Teacher, School 1, Appendix 13: 92).

Data from interviews and from observation indicated that the four students with SpLD from both schools had poor organizational skills and they also were not keen to complete their homework. Such factors as noted in Frith's theory of understanding dyslexia could be attributed to several factors, including the biological and cognitive factors as well as the influences from environment which negatively influenced children with SpLD.

6.4.5 Reading behaviours at home

Based on the reading, writing and speaking difficulties discussed in the cognitive perspectives section, a sub-theme associated with the family reading behaviours emerged which is presented in this section. Mothers of the children with SpLD were asked about the children's interest in reading at home, and how they practiced reading apart from school homework. The mothers talked about the family practice at home, and the children's behaviours towards it. It is noteworthy that out of the four parents that were interviewed, three of them did not go beyond primary level in their own education, while only one had reached the intermediate level. The one who had an intermediate certificate had an interest in pursuing high school and college education part time; her husband was a senior lecturer at a university in KSA. However according to this mother her husband did not have any knowledge

concerning his child's SpLD. Additionally, the father did not consider his daughter as being handicapped (Parent 1, School 2, Appendix 16: 394).

The literature review regarding the behavioural perspectives in Chapter two section 2.2.3 has also discussed that children with dyslexia sometimes get irritated and upset because of their complex learning needs. Since they often experience depression and a low sense of worth, which have a direct impact on class participation, the importance of family reading behaviour cannot be underestimated. Some of the parents stated that although they usually bought story books for their children, they did not encourage them to read (Parent 1, School 2, Appendix 16: 391).

Lack of support at home made students with SpLD lack motivation to learn even at school. However, during the interviews, I found that some of the parents did show interest in the learning of their children. Parent 2 from School 1 stated that although her daughter did not like reading, she usually encouraged her to read at home and even rewarded her for any improvement she made (Appendix 15: 326).

It was obvious that the children who were encouraged by their parents to read developed their reading habits and made significant improvement. Cd2 from School 2 was keen to read the Holy Quran because her mother had told her that by reading the Quran, a person would go to heaven (Child 2, School 2, Appendix 19: 570).

The parents were also interested in using technologies for initiating reading among their children. Parent 1 from School 1 suggested that the computer should be taught as a basic subject, not as optional. She told me that she enrolled her daughter in the

school computer programme but the results were ineffective (Parent 1, School 2, Appendix 15: 370).

Parent 1 from School 2 stated that her daughter liked colouring workbooks and did not like written stories. She tried to read from the TV tape or from translated cartoon films. The parent also stated that they did not read or encourage reading at home (Parent 1, School 2, Appendix 16: 391).

One of the noteworthy points that could be extracted from the conversation I had with this parent showed that teachers could also use teaching methods like colouring workbooks and translated cartoon films for improving the reading abilities in the students, rather than using difficult written lessons and stories. Thus, from the observation of the four students with SpLD, I noted that they had similar hobbies such as drawing and watching cartoons. Nonetheless Cd1 from School 1 liked to read children's stories but had no computer skills; Cd2 from School 2 used the Internet to facilitate her learning. These findings are worthwhile for understanding the role of the family in improving reading skills.

Moreover, from the conversations with students, I noted that students with SpLD have different behaviours towards different types of reading. For example Cd1 From School 1 hated reading in the classroom, but she would attend the Quran reading classes in which she was registered (Parent 1 School 1, Appendix 15: 313). Cd2 from the same school, on the other hand, also hated classroom reading but she liked reading Arabic translated cartoon films. Sometimes she was not able to read the cartoon films or understand the translation, but her interest in this type of reading was not lost. She admitted that she could not read like other students but

she made efforts in spelling letters and reading the words. She liked to read stories with graphics and images. She also liked translated cartoon films but the rapid movement of subtitles and conversation made her reading more difficult (Child 2, School 1, Appendix 18: 492)(Child 2, School 1, Appendix 18: 504).

Only Cd2 from School 2 showed positive reading behaviours and, undoubtedly, her family should be given credit for encouraging her to read. Although she had phonological difficulties and problems in spelling letters, she showed improvement. She admitted that she liked to read with her SEN teacher in order to enhance her reading. She also liked to use her smart phone and computer in order to improve her reading level. She was able to read from 'WhatsApp' some reading texts and messages; she was able to identify who was the sender and the content of the message. Thus, it can be summarized that family reading at home can have a positive impact on students with SpLD (Parent 2, School 2, Appendix 16: 392).

6.4.6 Negligence at school at and home

Another theme i.e. family neglect and students' negligence was extracted from the data as well as from the literature review. The Head Teacher from School 1 pointed out that negligence from the students themselves is the biggest reason behind their difficulties, when asked what SpLD meant to her she had this to say:

SpLD is inability to learn, it may happen to any person's life. In the classroom the students have inability to learn. They don't pay attention to the teacher when she teaches them in the classroom. They don't focus or concentrate on the lessons. They don't do well in tests and exams. The teachers spend long time with them, so they take a lot of the teachers' time and require more effort to teach as well (Head Teacher, School 1, Appendix 13: 31).

From the above response I noted that the Head Teacher considered lack of attention and poor concentration was the biggest reason for students' difficulty. Furthermore, during the interview with the students they mentioned their hatred towards literacy lessons and classroom teachers. To deal with such negligence, the SEN teachers adopted a collective strategy by involving the classroom teachers as a part of the intervention. This can be linked with the first theme of this section in which I stated that the behaviours of students were adversely influenced by the teachers' behaviours and how they dealt with students with SpLD. In contrast, the family environment always plays a major role in the development of child's basic educational environment. Therefore, it can be argued from the interview with the Head Teacher in School 1 that by classroom teachers calling such students 'lazy', 'naughty' and 'neglected' demotivated their internal capabilities which led to the students intentionally avoiding such classes and lessons. The sentiments by the Head Teacher were confirmed by one of the teachers whom during the interview she referred to students with SpLD as 'naughty'.

Teacher 1, School 1

...those students are very naughty, you see them very quiet in the classroom but when you see them in the schoolyard, they scream their heads off, in my personal opinion those students are naughty, they don't care about learning and depend on the SEN teacher so that's why they don't study at home (Appendix 13: 52).

Teacher 2 from School 1 put entire blame on the family. According to her, although some students were willing to learn, they were not able to do so because they lacked support from the family. The family environment usually has a direct impact on the success of children. Some children actually opened a huge discussion on

parent's neglect and lack of care. According to the same teacher, their families spoilt the children. The teacher also raised the issue of the accessibility to smart devices enjoyed by every student. They argued that parents bought such devices for their children, which had a direct impact on the learning behaviours of their children. One of the pieces from these interview transcripts reflects on the negligent behaviours of family which consequently weakened students' learning behaviours (Teacher 2, School 1, Appendix 13: 53).

Teacher 1 from School 2 also stated that some parents were only worried about the marks of their children in assessment, but they did not put any efforts to work with the teachers in dealing with such problems (Appendix 14: 253).

The SEN Supervisor blamed the teachers for failing to support the students with SpLD as they should be. She complained that they only did their work just for the sake of it, and did not even seek to broaden their knowledge on how to support children with SpLD in their classes. As a result the students were simply neglected and not given any support (SEN Supervisor, Appendix 17: 456).

6.5 Pedagogic strategies

In terms of the environmental influences, the observation data confirmed the interaction between the environment and the cognitive level as Frith (1995) explained in her framework. I noted that the methods and strategies used by the teachers contributed vitally in drawing the attention of students with SpLD. The strategies used in the resource room, as opposed to the strategies applied in the regular classrooms helped in examining how focused strategies can help in increasing the student's attention. One of the teaching aids used by the SEN

Teacher from School 1 was a doll and a small puppet theatre which she created herself with very simple tools (Appendix 20.1, Resource room Field Notes). The SEN Teacher said to Cd1 that “Today we have a guest with us to help us in our lesson”. Then she started to tell a story about a vowel letter called ‘alef’; the guest was that new vowel letter, which the SEN Teacher tried to introduce in a creative way. When she finished the story, she asked Cd1 some questions, and the student gave the correct answer. This example showed how much the student was focused in the resource room and how much she enjoyed the lesson. The SEN Teacher in School 1 was using approaches that encouraged the students’ attention and helped them to remain focused on the lessons taught in the classroom.

During observations in the classrooms I noted that there were a lot of distracters, such as students playing with their hair, talking to other students, dozing during the lessons and playing with things such as gloves or cases of pens. For example, I observed Cd2 from School 2 playing with white gloves and using these to scare her friends. She was obviously not attentive to what was being taught; she could not even trace the page number when the teacher asked her to read during the lesson. (Appendix 21.5, Classroom Field Notes). Similarly, I observed Cd1 from the same school moving about in the classroom and talking with her friends. The classroom teachers rarely noticed such movements (Appendix 21.4, Classroom Field Notes). From School 1 Cd 1 was not interacting with her teacher and not copying notes from the board. I also observed that in those in-group activities she was dependent upon the support from her friends (Appendix 21.1, 21.2, Classroom Field Notes). The four students with SpLD that I observed kept yawning during lessons in their classrooms. It was observed that classroom teachers were putting pressure on the

students that did not make them respond to questions correctly. For instance, Teacher 1 from School 1 kept shouting at Cd2 in front of her classmates (Appendix 21.3, Classroom Field Notes).

The classroom observations showed that students with SpLD tended to learn more in the resource room, where SEN teachers employed effective strategies to encourage the students. However, it was found that most of the student with SpLD lacked attentiveness towards lessons and were involved in other activities when presented in the classroom.

6.6 Cultural and traditional perceptions of disability

From the interview data it was evident that students with SpLD in this study have low self-esteem and a negative perception of themselves. Observations also confirmed that such students lacked confidence to participate actively in class and during lessons. However, from the interviews, I found that students with SpLD, and their parents, were more talkative as compared to their peers without SpLD. The mothers were talking about their children's difficulties, except that some of them did not want to talk about their children's difficulties with others or were afraid to tell others that their child had SpLD. The reasons for this were the influence of the cultural perceptions of persons with disability. I noted that the mothers participated in the discussion, since they were aware of the fact that these difficulties were not a disease or something wrong with brain. Nonetheless, they were still reluctant to talk about it. One of the parents highlighted the cultural problems associated with the Saudi society. She stated that if anyone heard that her daughter had dyslexia it could have a negative impact on her marriage in the future,

as everyone would always think she was ‘stupid’ (Parent 1, School 1, Appendix 15: 352).

Another parent also pointed out that if people learnt that her child had difficulties at school, they would start talking about her negatively by saying that she is ‘stupid’ or ‘sick’, this could affect her future. The influence of culture with regard to the society’s perception of persons with disability was found to be a big concern to the parents of children with SpLD, so they lived in denial, which consequently made it difficult for the children to get the necessary intervention to alleviate the problem (Parent 2, School 2, Appendix 16: 428).

From the data gathered in this study it was evident that the cultural and traditional perceptions with regard to persons with disability were a setback to implementing inclusive education. By arguing that SpLD is a family matter which should be kept a secret, the conditions for the students with SpLD deteriorated further. One parent however was supportive towards her child, and she did not care what the society or other people said. During her interview, she admitted that her daughter had a difficulty, and she did not hide it from others. She said that her daughter was enrolled in the SpLD programme in the same school where her friends were studying. She said that she was not bothered by what people said (Parent 2, School 2, Appendix 16: 419).

The students however did not seem care about their difficulties, they responded to every question freely without hiding anything about their difficulty. One of the students described herself as ‘lazy’ and not able to read and write like other students. On the other hand, another one disclosed that she had reading and writing

difficulties, and felt embarrassed when asked to read in front of classmates. Similarly, the third child confirmed that she read like a small child because she had difficulties in reading and writing (Child 2, School 1, Appendix 18: 501) (Child 1, School 2, Appendix 19: 557).

Although the children admitted to having difficulties in learning from the four responses gathered from students with SpLD, I noted that their perception towards the difficulties was influenced by the home and school environments as well as the cultural and traditional beliefs which perceived people with disability with a lot suspicion.

SEN teachers explained the reasons behind the non-cooperative behaviours from the students with SpLD. One of the SEN teachers stated that although most of the students accepted being registered in SpLD programmes, negative comments from their classmates and friends discouraged them. Their attitude changed after the rest of the students' negative comments because they were getting additional support. The SEN teacher further stated that there was a need to increase the awareness about the use of the resource room by students with SpLD. According to her, the resource room should not be seen as a room for 'lazy students'. In order to increase their awareness, the SEN Teacher in School 1 invited other students to the resource room so that they could see what was going on there. Workshops were also arranged during free times. By doing so all the students started liking the resource room and wanted to get registered as well (SEN Teacher, School 1, Appendix 13: 86).

The SEN Teacher in School 2 also stated that such students lost their confidence when they were not given a chance to participate in school activities. She tried to help such students by arranging a programme known as 'Saudi National Day' during which the entire school celebrated it. On that day students with SpLD were asked to come in front in the morning assembly and make a presentation on what they like, such as singing national songs. The students were assured that they would not be given anything to read in front of the others to avoid making them nervous. She pointed out that such students need encouragement and support for building up the level of their confidence (SEN Teacher, School 2, Appendix 14: 287). During my personal observation, I noticed that some classroom teachers kept shouting to students with SpLD telling them that they would fail if they did not make any progress.

Some classroom teachers however dealt with the students like all the others, hence they did not provide them with extra support. Due to inadequate funding by the MoE, one of the SEN teachers stated that they sometimes spent money from their salary in order to create a comfortable classroom for the students (SEN Teacher, School 1, Appendix 13: 116).

Throughout my interviews with the classroom teachers in School 2, I did not hear much complaining about students with SpLD from them. Some students also had a positive attitude towards students with SpLD. Thus, Frith's approach can be confirmed by stating that cultural and environmental factors are underlying aspects shaping the behaviours of students with dyslexia in KSA.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the participants' perspectives of SpLD with regard to Frith's model discussed in Chapter two. There was evidence from the data that the participants viewed the causes of SpLD from the three perspectives highlighted in Firth's framework of understanding dyslexia from the biological, cognitive and behavioural perspectives.

Some of the emerging issues regarding the biological perspective were the genetic factor, dyslexia being seen as a disease or caused by sickness, prenatal complications including difficult in child birth as well as the type of food consumed during pregnant or poor nutrition. One interesting factor which emerged regarding the biological factor was consanguinity. There is a tendency for intermarriages with close family relatives like cousins, which according to one of the participants was a possible cause of disability among the Saudi community.

The cognitive perspective also featured prominently in the data analysis. The participants associated SpLD with difficulties in reading, short-term memory, lack of attention and difficulties in following instructions. Some of the participants however blamed the condition on lack of effective pedagogic strategies leading to poor performance in literacy.

The behavioural perspective was another factor which was highlighted by the participants. Some of the participants viewed the students with SpLD as 'lazy', or just refusing to work extra hard. The negativity by students with SpLD towards classroom teachers was due to the rigid methods of teaching, the class environment, learning aids and materials. Some classroom teachers were putting pressure on the

students because they were under pressure themselves from the MoE; this behaviour led to students with SpLD developing hatred towards their classroom teachers.

Due to these circumstances, students with SpLD had a tendency to avoid classes, since they felt embarrassed in class, hence getting discouraged to learn. Data gathered from the students with SpLD in this study indicated that they were motivated and confident while in the resource room, unlike in the regular classrooms, which indicated that a good learning environment and support were lacking in the regular classes. Teachers had conflicting perceptions of the resource room. While some thought it was ideal for supporting students with SpLD, others thought it was a waste of resources and did not benefit the students. From the data gathered from the participants, it has been shown necessary for the MoE of KSA to ensure that all stakeholders are involved in supporting students with SpLD, and those with other disabilities as well. Doing so would alleviate the negative attitudes towards students with disability. The MoE is ultimately responsible for enhancing the learning experiences of the students with SpLD.

7 DISCUSSION

7.1 Introduction

Following extensive data analysis, this chapter provides a discussion of the research findings. In this chapter I have answered the main research question by investigating the strategies for identification and provision framed in the Saudi context of actual classrooms. A range of issues were also investigated and discussed concerning the difficulties children and teachers encounter in the classroom, teachers', advisers', parents' and children with SpLD's perspectives of inclusion as well as the kind of identification and support that is offered in two primary schools in one city in KSA. The answers to the research question are structured in consistency with the propositions made for this study.

In the first chapter I stated that the aim of the study was to investigate the educational provision for students with SpLD in KSA, including the policy on SEN; I also said I would investigate the teachers', advisors' and parents' understanding of SpLD and their attitude towards the inclusion of students with SpLD in regular schools. At the same time I would investigate the assessment procedures for students with SpLD and the support given to the teachers by the MoE. Data would be collected from two primary schools in one city in KSA. For this purpose, the study has gathered significant data from different research studies in order to relate my study with past studies and the literature on SpLD.

Frith's framework for understanding dyslexia was extensively referred to in the study by examining data from three perspectives identified by Frith (1995), comprising the biological perspective, the cognitive perspective, and the

behavioural perspective. Answers to the research question were developed with reference to Frith's framework for understanding dyslexia and the data were analysed using a constructivist approach; other aspects of SpLD were also considered in answers to the research question. Chapter two and Chapter three have provided extensive information from the literature, and drawing from Frith's model, provide an understanding of dyslexia from different perspectives. Chapter 4 was the methodology chapter while in Chapter 5 I presented the data analysed from interviews, from observations and from documents. In Chapter 6 I gave consideration to the implications of the current findings for theory and practice.

Four students with SpLD were selected to participate in this research project; they all seemed to cope with the difficulties despite experiencing SpLD especially due to the support they were getting from the SEN teachers. The responses of the selected participants, including teachers and parents, were put to consideration when determining the research outcomes. Thus, the outcomes of the study have been developed through the participants' responses, from observations and from the literature review as well as from document analysis.

Reid (2013) has gathered authenticated and reliable information about specific learning difficulties, specifically dyslexia and its consequences within the population. The literature has widely indicated that dyslexia exists amongst different learning difficulties and there may be some probability of genetic inheritance (Grigorenko, 2001). However, even if the genotype were discernible, environmental factors are highly influential on presenting behaviours (Elliott and Gibbs, 2008). It is a fact that dyslexia is mainly connected with certain reading and

writing difficulties. Most people with dyslexia usually face enormous troubles and difficulties during their learning processes (Reid, 2003). Therefore, the personal and professional attributes of people with dyslexia are widely influenced because of the challenges they face.

The study findings have suggested that the participants understood dyslexia as difficulties in processing, reading, writing, and spelling including word and letter reversals. The study also suggests that although students with SpLD are considered to have above average intelligence, they at the same time have decoding issues, visualization issues, or jumbling of letters, and comprehension issues. An overwhelming finding for the issue of difficulties faced by students with SpLD was that SEN teachers from both schools related dyslexia to phonological processing more than other participants. Dyslexia was generally related to difficulties in processing, reading, spelling, and decoding. Classroom teachers and parents in this study also indicated some issues regarding the difficulties that students with SpLD faced in reading and writing in general but they seemed not be aware of the relationship between phonological processing and dyslexia.

Study findings also indicated that the parents and teachers' definitions of dyslexia included several concepts such as reversals of letters or numbers, jumbling of letters, visualization issues, and comprehension issues, which are not typically associated with dyslexia. Dyslexia is a literacy-based learning difficulty that is characterized by difficulties with reading, spelling, writing, and processing at any level of intelligence. Dyslexia can be defined as a type of specific learning

difficulty which is ‘neurobiological’ in origin and results from an unexpected phonological deficit (Ferrer et al., 2010).

A study by Ness and Southall (2010) suggested that teachers rarely associate dyslexia with phonological processing ‘disorder’. This potential lack of information about dyslexia can result in lower teaching efficacy in an inclusive classroom (Berry, 2010), resulting in the child with dyslexia remaining poorly supported in mainstream classrooms and beyond (Woolfson and Brady, 2009; Cook and Cameron, 2010). Dyslexia is defined as a specific learning disorder: it is particularly important to understand the disorder and its practical implications when monitoring children.

Children with dyslexia generally have average to above average intelligence (Snowling, 2012), but their performance does not meet the intelligence level when compared with their peers. Children with dyslexia need assistance in finding ways to use their strengths in order to overcome the challenges they face in meeting their appropriate intellectual level of performance in the classroom. No matter how smart the child may be, dyslexia can prevent him/her from succeeding in learning due to difficulties in writing, reading and spelling. It is important to educate parents and teachers on how to provide the best services according to the needs of the child.

Dyslexia is based on a phonological deficit related to associating each letter with its corresponding sound. It is a major challenge that persists throughout life. The main reason behind adoption of the term SpLD is the prevalence of a disorder such as dyslexia. It was analysed from Frith’s framework (1995) that there are three

perspectives, that is biological, cognitive, and behavioural that may influence the developmental difficulties of individuals.

Data from teachers and parents in this study typically suggest that they consider SpLD as a 'disease' which is thought to contribute to problems with reading and writing (Al-Abdulkarim et al., 2010). For example, Parent 2 from School 1 was amazed when she realised that SpLD was not a disease. She then agreed to send her daughter to the support programme for students with SpLD. All the mothers reacted negatively when they were told about the programme due to lack of knowledge and, due to the perception the society has regarding people with disability, especially girls, they feared that their daughters would not get married. Their perception of SpLD changed after they interacted with SEN teachers and came to know about the importance and purpose of the programme in supporting the children facing difficulties in reading and writing.

The findings of this study have also indicated that the teachers and parents should be made aware about SpLD in order to implement effective strategies. At the same time, the responses of teachers have also shown that awareness of SpLD plays a significant role in the development of effective strategies for supporting students with SpLD. The study also suggests that better educational support for students with SpLD would certainly result in better educational outcomes.

7.2 Educational provision for students with SpLD in primary schools in one city in KSA

The data from this study suggested that although there were efforts to meet the educational needs for students with SpLD, more needed to be done to meet the

needs of all students. The study suggested that only a few selected schools had support programmes for students with SpLD while the majority of the schools had none (SEN Supervisor, Appendix 17: 448).

The data gathered from the participants indicated that even the schools which had support programmes for students with SpLD only accommodated at most 18 students. The rest of the students were kept on the waiting list, since the resource rooms could only accommodate very few students (SEN Teacher, School 1, Appendix 13: 20) (SEN Teacher, School 2, Appendix 14: 175).

The study however suggested conflicting perceptions on the support given to the students with SpLD in the resource rooms. For instance while the students and their parents stated that the use of the resource room was quite significant for supporting students overcome their barriers, some of the classroom teachers thought it was a waste of time and resources. For example, one of the classroom teachers argued that she did not notice any significant difference after the students used the resource room.

Honestly, sometimes I feel this is useless. I did not see any improvement on the students' academic performance. For example the students with SpLD are taught different literacy skills from the literacy skills that are taught in the regular classroom. They are normally taught skills that are lower than the grades we are teaching in the regular classrooms (Teacher 1, School 1, Appendix 13: 88).

The support programmes for students with SpLD play a significant role in the community settings for providing an appropriate level of support to the children with SpLD within primary schools. The rationale for the development of such provision was to alleviate the difficulties experienced by students with SpLD, so

that they could reach their full potential. Lovey (2013) has mentioned that educational provisions must be provided to the children with SpLD. The author has shown that the application of certain educational provisions will certainly result in positive outcomes within secondary schools. The findings of the study have suggested that the educational provision for students with SpLD needs to be improved in order to improve their learning outcomes.

7.3 Inclusion of students with SpLD in regular schools

The data from this study suggests that inclusive education for students with SpLD was another challenge, due to several factors. For example the classroom teachers from School 1 who were interviewed stated that they were not comfortable having students with SpLD in their classes since they were an extra burden. They argued that the pupil: teacher ratio was too high; such that it was difficult provide one to one support to the children with SpLD. Some of them advocated for special classes for students with SpLD, or that they get teaching assistants who can be supporting those with SpLD as the teacher attended to the rest of the students in class (Teacher 1, School 1, Appendix 13: 130).

The mothers, on the other hand, supported the idea of their children learning together with the rest of the children. This however was more concerning the fear that their children would be labelled as having a disability, which would have a negative image for the family in the society for having a ‘disabled’ child. The four parents who were interviewed actually supported inclusive education for their children (Appendix 15: 358-359) (Appendix 16: 424-425).

Classrooms that are not dyslexia-friendly, can transform a learning difference into a deficit (Mortimore and Dupree, 2008). The students who were interviewed complained that they felt embarrassed in class since they could not perform like their colleagues, and they expressed disappointment with the classroom teachers who sometimes referred to them as 'lazy' in front of their colleagues. The four students with SpLD in this study stated that they actually hated school, while some intentionally failed to go to school to avoid some classes. All four students who were interviewed expressed their satisfaction with learning in the resource room where they felt they were getting better support and the SEN teachers did not embarrass them when they failed. The data collected from the students indicated a lack of support in the regular classrooms which consequently influenced their self-esteem.

Regarding inclusion of students with SpLD in regular classrooms, the findings of this study were similar to the findings by Norwich (2014b). The responses by the teachers also agree with the literature by Elbaum and Vaughn (2001), Al-Nahdi (2007), Al-Mousa (2010), and Alquraini (2010) who argue that due to the pressure in managing students, teachers try to exclude such students from mainstream classrooms. According to Altinok and Kingdon (2009), teachers find large classes with students with SpLD difficult to manage. Furr and Bacharach, (2008) assert that the negative impact of large classrooms leads teachers to excluding students with extra demand like those with SpLD since they see it as an extra responsibility. Despite the MoE stressing on the importance of inclusion for the SpLD in primary schools yet the actual conditions are against inclusion and encourage exclusion. Countries like the UK have teaching assistants to support students with SEN which makes it easier for

teachers to accommodate the students in the regular schools (Department for Education, 2011).

Mortimore and Zsolnai (2015) in their paper concluded that inclusive dyslexia-friendly classroom offers a model to allow the restoration of positive self-concept and the resulting enhanced social competence. It also has a role to play in supporting the acceptance and social development of all learners, with and without additional support needs.

Learning technology can promote the inclusion of students with various disabilities. A study conducted by Bjekic et al. (2012) which mainly focused on the inclusive education of children with disabilities within the classroom indicated the importance of using an e-environment. They further emphasised that providing proper support and applying new teaching elements and roles and new assistive technology and e-learning technology will certainly result in the increased level of motivation among children with SpLD (Bjekic et al., 2012). Likewise, Pino and Mortari (2014) argued that students with SpLD must be supported to achieve higher level of education just like their peers without SpLD. They further stated that exclusion of such children from the regular classrooms leads to lower self-esteem for children with SpLD (Pino and Mortari, 2014).

7.4 Awareness of SpLD

The findings of the study have clearly indicated that the increased awareness of SpLD, especially among the mothers, resulted in better understanding and support for the children with SpLD. The four parents who were interviewed stated that initially, they objected to their children being enrolled in the support programmes

for SpLD due to fear of the social stigma associated with disability. Since SpLD is a hidden disability, which means children's impairment is not apparent or visible, they feared that once their daughters were labelled as having disability they would never get married. Just as stated earlier, in KSA people with disability are viewed with a lot of suspicion due to different myths associated with causes of disability.

At the beginning we thought that would affect my child, because the other students and classroom teachers would think that she is different and she goes to the resource room because she is lazy or stupid. Also people would ask me about that and would think she has a disability while she is OK and normal. Honestly we were very worried about her future marriage that's why her dad refused first (Parent 1, School 1, Appendix 15: 352).

Nonetheless, the study suggested that the classroom teachers from both schools were not keen to go for further training or to attend workshops to enhance their knowledge on how to support for children with SpLD. For example the SEN Teacher in School 2 complained that whenever she organised workshops at the school the teachers were unwilling to attend.

When I prepare some workshops and invite classroom teachers some of them don't attend, they don't care. They just keep blaming the education system, the students or their families (SEN Teacher, School 2, Appendix 14: 251).

Peer and Reid (2012) have mentioned that the increased awareness level about dyslexia is directly associated with the better management and support of the children. According to them, the increased awareness level in regard to dyslexia is helpful for the general population to develop effective strategies for the support of children with dyslexia. Reid (2012) has also mentioned that the increased awareness level about dyslexia is directly connected with the increased support of

the SpLD children. He also argues that the teachers can easily develop effective strategies through gaining proper knowledge and information about dyslexia.

The findings of my study confirmed the importance of teachers' awareness of SEN which leads to the acceptance of students with SpLD. Duncan and Bingham (2011) have also presented similar findings in which they maintain that the knowledge and understanding of disabilities amongst adults in a society can influence the support given to individuals with disability within the home, school and the workplace.

7.4.1 Awareness regarding the biological perspective

Just as I have indicated in Chapters two and six, Frith's model for understanding dyslexia was used in this study. It was therefore prudent to find out the participants' awareness of dyslexia with regard to biological causes. It seems likely from other research that biological factors such as hereditary and genetic conditions could be the causes of SpLD in families.

The findings of my research have indicated that some of the respondents described SpLD from the biological perspective, while others defined it by using different terms. Pumfrey and Reason (2013), state that the utilization of biological terms always plays a significant role in the community settings for better understanding of dyslexia. As I discussed this in Chapter two, section 2.2.1 that genetic factors are considered as some of the dimensions of dyslexia, however, the occurrence of dyslexia in a family is not sufficient to support the genetic explanation of the problem as long as the environment is part of the shared components of child development.

7.4.2 Awareness regarding the cognitive perspective

In Chapters two and six I also discussed the cognitive perspective in relation to the causes of dyslexia, and discussed it in terms of Frith's framework and from the participants' view. The rationale behind the inclusion of this perspective within this research-based project was to find out the knowledge of teachers and parents in regard to the causes of dyslexia. In Chapter two I have clearly indicated that enhanced knowledge about the cognitive perspective of dyslexia is strongly connected with the better supporting of students with SpLD within classroom settings.

Reading difficulties have been identified as a major and significant aspect of the cognitive perspective for students with dyslexia. The findings of current research have indicated that the four students with SpLD in this study have certain reading difficulties, which had a negative impact on their academic performance as well as their personality. The study also confirmed that the students with SpLD in this study tend to face certain difficulties in the identification of similar words during reading. A study conducted by Kamhi and Catts (2012), clearly indicated that most of the children usually face enormous complications and difficulties in the identification of words during reading. Their study further indicated that the teachers must focus on such students in order to address their complications in an effective way (Kamhi and Catts, 2012).

Writing difficulties were also considered a significant aspect of the cognitive perspective with regard to dyslexia. The study indicated that the children studied experience difficulties in writing. Some of the common problems noted during the

study included poor handling of the pen along with difficulty in identifying similar words. A study by Peter et al. (2013) indicated that people with dyslexia usually experience certain writing difficulties which fall within the cognitive perspective of dyslexia. The study has also indicated that people with dyslexia have certain types of writing difficulties (Peter et al., 2013).

The findings of this study also suggest that some teachers' views regarding the difficulties in writing faced by the students with SpLD were similar to the points as discussed by Frith (1995) in her framework. Data from this study confirmed her perspective that a proportion of the poor readers lack ability to form a specific cognitive process, which is responsible for grapheme-phoneme correspondence. The research findings were consistent with the perspective of Frith and Morton (1995) who supported the observation that the cause of such difficulties were due to the challenges faced by students with SpLD in learning the alphabets. Such challenges led to students with SpLD having difficulties with particular words and in spelling.

The findings of my study also support the view that there are certain memory problems, which have also been associated with the condition of dyslexia. Some of the teachers who participated in the study had noticed that children with dyslexia face certain difficulties and problems in memorizing similar words during reading and writing. The study further suggests that the memory problems lead to challenges associated with dyslexia.

These findings were consistent with Frith's framework for understanding dyslexia as presented in Chapter two. Frith (1995) indicated poor phonological coding efficiency as the cause behind the poor reading skills as well as poor memory. In her framework Frith has also mentioned the cognitive aspects of short-term memory for students with dyslexia. Such students with SpLD face greater difficulty in retrieving letters from their memory because of the difficulties in the working memory. The literature in Chapter two also indicated that short-term memory is dependent upon the phonological rehearsals, verbal IQ test and verbal skills supported by good phonological ability (Frith, 1998).

Paul and Norbury (2012) have mentioned that there are certain memory problems, which are usually faced by the people with dyslexia. Their study suggested that the memory problems may also develop other complications related to dyslexia. However, inability to learn, recognize, and memorize different types of words is strongly connected with the problem of dyslexia.

The findings from this study correspond with the findings of Elbeheri et al. (2006) in which they found that students who have SpLD exhibit extreme difficulty in acquiring adequate proficiency in reading, writing, spelling and computational skills (Elbeheri et al., 2006). This study also indicated that students with SpLD usually experience a significant number of problems in understanding different skills and capabilities. In addition, these students frequently exhibit other learning and adjustment problems in the domains of expressive and receptive language, problem solving, physical skills, self-management, motivation, and social adjustment.

Therefore, it can be said that the findings of current study have a close relevance to the outcomes of past literature.

7.4.3 Awareness regarding the behavioural perspective

The final perspective which has been discussed in Frith's model is regarding the behavioural perspective of dyslexia. Some of the students in this study said that fear of being embarrassed in class by teachers and peers led them to avoid school. Chapter two, section 2.2.3 and Chapter six, section 6.4 of this research project has widely discussed the behavioural perspective. The findings of this study would suggest that the behaviour of children always plays a significant role in the community settings. Moreover, it is necessary for the parents and teachers to be aware about the behavioural perspective of dyslexia for the development of appropriate strategies for supporting students with dyslexia.

The findings of my research study have identified 'laziness' as a major behaviour of children having the complications of dyslexia. The findings have clearly indicated that the factor of 'laziness' is strongly connected with the improper attitudes and behaviour of their parents along with teachers. For example, data from the study indicated one of the students was considered 'lazy' because she could not complete the work given by the teachers.

This finding was in line with Morton and Frith (1995), who in their study have also confirmed negative external influences and poor learning environment as major causes behind the worsening condition for the students with SpLD. The researchers defined how external causes, like hostile relationship with teacher or misguided teaching, could primarily impact the Supervisory Attentional System (SAS)

component of the student with SpLD. Unlike conceptualisation of concentration which is an almost innate ability that occurs in young children, Norman & Shallice (2000) argue that some children may lack schema to achieve desired behaviour such that extra control, the SAS, would be required; however, they maintain that motivational factors supplement activation influences of the SAS. Since students with cognitive disorder may have impaired conceptualisation of concentration, teachers have a responsibility to motivate learners with dyslexia since their concentration span may be lower than their peers.

Morton and Frith (1995) further suggested teachers draw a detailed conclusion supported by evidence in order to consider a child as experiencing dyslexia. This is so because most of the time due to behavioural issues and negative influences from external environment, a child develops learning difficulties like alphabetic impairments and executive function problems. Likewise, Frith (2011) has mentioned that students' behaviours such as not attending lessons, avoiding literacy classes, showing hatred towards the classroom and admiration for the SEN teacher, further indicate that the underlying problem lies in the behaviours of these participants. Moreover, from the data analysis, it was also found that imbalanced emotions, late school going age, parents' neglect and lack of support make the difficulty level of the child more problematic. Frith in her behavioural perspective has also showed that what children with SpLD do or how they behave is dependent upon the behaviours in their surrounding environment. Pressures from the classroom teacher, extraordinary care from the family, availability of everything a child wants are the reason for the children non-attending and absenteeism behaviours.

Frith (1995) reported that students with dyslexia expressed more loneliness and felt less integrated in school; they were victimized more often than the other students. These findings suggested that the emotional effects resulting from dyslexia make life in school difficult for these children. Furthermore, Frith (2002) has noted that they have a higher level of anxiety than children without dyslexia. Specifically, they will tend to be more anxious than their peers if something seems beyond their control. Increased levels of anxiety are also reflected in more frequent somatic complaints. These children become fearful and anxious because of constant frustration and confusion in school. As a result, these students avoid going to schools and feel de-motivated.

The findings of this study have suggested that the students who tried to skip school did so because of inappropriate behaviour of their teachers. The findings have also indicated that the selected students within School 1 were not motivated to go to their school. The rationale behind this behaviour concerned inappropriate attitudes and behaviours of the teachers.

The findings of this study have also indicated that embarrassment was another major aspect which contributed to the negative behaviours exhibited by students with dyslexia. The study established that some of the students were continuously embarrassed in front of the entire class because teachers had a negative attitude towards them. It creates anxiety and frustration among people with dyslexia, since they have no control over their condition. Living with feelings of self-doubt and self-recrimination for years, erodes the self-confidence of children, adolescents and adults with dyslexia. These negative and overwhelming experiences produce a great

deal of stress and discouragement among these students since they have difficulties in performing well academically.

Various studies have been conducted to highlight the linguistic issues being faced by students with dyslexia. It is important to gain insight into the actions and tools developed for supporting the learners with dyslexia. In-depth interviews have been performed by San Jose (2012) to obtain information about the linguistic encounters of the participants with dyslexia. It is found that self-pity has been found among the participants. The most embarrassing situation for students with SpLD is mispronunciation of words during literacy lessons. Many students were found to be extremely passive because they were fed-up of being embarrassed in front of their classmates. It is therefore recommended that the role of teachers and parents should be highlighted and awareness should be created for the appropriate linguistic development of the students with dyslexia (San Jose, 2012).

Green (2014) indicated that dyslexia is a potential source of stress for both the students with dyslexia and the teachers. This study argues that effects of the condition on the learning experience of students can vary from minor to extreme. It is suggested that SpLD may not only be confined to academic difficulties but also have enormous effects on the self-esteem and self-concepts of the students with SpLD. This study provides an alternative solution to this problem by recommending that dyslexia-friendly schools may be established to promote learning among these special students and for their self-motivation. The interrelationship between dyslexia and self-confidence needs to be understood, as it is the key to implementing meaningful interventions. Embarrassment is the basic

stigma that obstructs the students from seeking help, so that the students might be afraid to ask for assistance (Green, 2014). Hence, safe-learning environments should be created to improve the self-confidence, and the responsiveness of students with dyslexia towards linguistic provision.

Family reading behaviour has also been identified as another aspect of the behavioural perspectives, which has been supported by the findings of this research study. The study suggested that the impaired family behaviour is strongly connected with the negative behaviours of children with dyslexia. Various studies have been conducted to investigate the effect of family behaviours on the behaviour of children with SpLD. van Bergen et al. (2014) provided a detailed analysis of the risk factors associated with the emergence of chronic dyslexia among the participants. In their study participants with an uncooperative family background showed mild phonological awareness in kindergarten with impairments in rapid naming and letter knowledge among the participants. This study also compared the literacy environment provided to these students at home and also studied the literacy abilities of the parents with dyslexia with the non- parents with dyslexia. Parental literacy abilities are also associated with the level of self-motivation of students with dyslexia (van Bergen et al., 2014).

Frith (1995) has made a proper comparison between the students with dyslexia and students who did not have dyslexia in their third year of secondary education. Most of the participants were interviewed in relation to students' difficulties with the family or students' negligence. The development of mental characteristics,

attitudes, aspirations, ambitions and abilities are strongly connected with the better behaviour and proper concentration of parents.

Morton and Frith (1995) in their framework have also focused on the impact of the environmental elements on the complexity of interactions within a specific society. They have emphasized that while considering factors such as the biological or the cognitive there should be consideration of the impact of the environmental and social factors.

The role of classroom teacher was not specifically highlighted by Frith in her framework but the need to take into account the good learning environment in supporting the SAS component and behavioural influence is pointed out in the Morton and Frith (1995) framework. This was evident in that some students' performance was improving with the parental support and effective guidance of the classroom teachers.

7.5 Identification and assessment of SpLD

The study suggests that the process of identification and assessment of students with SpLD was not consistent in the schools studied. For example there were no standardised tools for assessing students with SpLD. The findings also seem to confirm the assertion by Alquraini (2010) that although Acts and regulations like (RSEPI) are present in KSA, isolation of students with disability is still prevalent in schools. Based on the different identification and assessment process in both schools, it can be argued the students with SpLD were not well assessed, which could affect how the schools were supporting them achieve their potential. The study indicated that neither school followed the required procedures for assessing

SpLD to confidently categorise them for the purpose of providing appropriate support as per the SEN policy (Ministry of Education, 2013). Elbeheri et al. (2009) argued that poor identification and assessment strategies can further deteriorate the efficacy of supporting students, especially those with SpLD.

According to the data gathered from the classroom teachers and from the SEN teachers, they normally designed their own assessment tools, which they would then send to the SEN Supervisor for approval, which meant there were different versions of the assessment (SEN Teacher, School 1, Appendix 13: 68).

Although the SEN policy stated that the assessment should be conducted by a multidisciplinary team including classroom teachers, parents, student advisors, psychologists and the SEN teachers, the study suggested that none of these were involved in the assessment such that only the SEN teachers conduct the assessment and then provide the classroom teachers and the parents with a copy of the IEP to sign (Appendix 13: 64-65) (Appendix 15: 335).

The classroom teachers who were interviewed were of the opinion that the assessment of the students with SpLD was inadequate. For example the SEN Teacher in School 2 was of the opinion that teachers needed further training on the assessment and also standardised assessment tools (SEN Teacher, School 2, Appendix 14: 221).

7.6 Funding

Inadequate funding was cited as one of the challenges the schools were facing. Some of the teachers in this study stated that they usually struggled to get enough teaching aids, since the classes were not well equipped to support not only students

with SpLD, but all the students in the schools. One of the Head Teachers stated that according to the policy document, the MoE was supposed to provide funds for the resource room but the school hardly received enough money to equip it (Head Teacher, School 1, Appendix 13: 115).

The sentiments of the Head Teacher were supported by the SEN Teacher who stated that she was in some cases forced to spend her own money since she hardly received enough money to equip the resource room to adequately support students with SpLD.

SEN Teacher, School 1

What we get from the Ministry is not enough, to be honest; sometimes it takes time to get the money in order to buy some materials for the resource room such paper, ink, cards, and so on. I am sometimes forced to spend my own money to equip the resource room. We require more funding to equip the resource room and teacher training (Appendix 13: 116).

From the data gathered from the participants, it was evident that supporting students with SpLD was a big challenge due to inadequate funding. There was a need for the MoE to realise that children with SpLD, as well as those with other disabilities, require extra funding, unlike their peers without disability, if their needs are to be adequately met.

7.7 SEN Policy

The study suggests that there were conflicting issues regarding the SEN policy. Although the SEN Supervisor acknowledged that there was a SEN policy, she at the same time stated that the existing policy was out-dated and needed updating. The classroom teachers on the other hand stated that they had never seen any policy

document, although some of them said that they were regularly made to sign some documents from the MoE which according to them they did not bother to read (SEN Supervisor, Appendix 17: 452).

From the data gathered from the participants, there was a need for the MoE to prepare comprehensive policy guidelines to regulate educational provision for students, not only those with SpLD but for all students with SEN. Again there was a need for the MoE to make follow-up visits to ensure that the policy guidelines were implemented. The SEN teachers in this study stated they were rarely inspected by the SEN Supervisor, which was an indicator that the MoE was not effectively ensuring that the educational needs of students with SEN were met in the regular schools.

7.8 Staffing

All the participants from the two schools felt that they were seriously understaffed which consequently had an effect on their performance. They all stated that the MoE needed to recruit more teachers and teaching assistants to make their work easier, and also to facilitate meeting the educational needs for students with SpLD. For example, each of the two schools had just one SEN teacher who was responsible for students with SpLD. According to the SEN teachers there were very many students who were in the waiting list, even after they were determined to have SpLD because they could only enrol 18 students in the programme.

As another example, during the interview with the Head Teacher in School 1, she complained about understaffing in the school and that even after informing the

MoE no action was taken to address the issues (Head Teacher, School 1, Appendix 13: 25).

With the current situation of teachers' shortage in schools it was difficult to implement inclusive education for students with disabilities, including those with SpLD. There was the need for the MoE to address the issue for the needs of students with SpLD to be met adequately. This was crucial for SpLD programmes to succeed, considering that there were quite a number of students who were in the waiting list even after it was determined that they were eligible to be enrolled in SpLD programme.

7.9 Teacher training

Teacher training was another factor cited for the challenges faced in meeting the needs of students with SpLD in the two regular schools. The teachers complained that the MoE hardly sponsored them for further studies. The Head Teachers on the other hand stated that most of the classroom teachers trained many years ago and most of them only had a certificate in teacher education. They argued that employment of more graduate teachers could make a difference in meeting the needs of students with SpLD.

And as I told you before the ministry doesn't provide the teachers with training. It's all personal effort from the teachers and the school, the learning disability teacher organises some workshops and then invites the class teachers in order to create awareness (Head Teacher, School 1, Appendix 13: 115).

The other problem noted with regard to training was that some of the teachers were unwilling to attend the workshops organised by the SEN teachers to enlighten them on how to cater for students with SpLD in their classes (Appendix 14: 251).

These findings were observed by Al-Mousa (2010) and (Al-Ahmadi, 2009) who noted that classroom teachers are not given proper training to understand the curriculum design for students with SpLD to facilitate the community and the needs of the students which adversely impacted on the education of students with SpLD. Due to lack of training, teachers resulted in excluding the students with SpLD who they saw as an extra burden. Reid (2011) has stressed the importance of awareness and problems associated with low or lack of awareness regarding SpLD. Due to the low focus on awareness and training, children with SpLD involved in this study were wrongly labelled as 'lazy' by both the teachers and the parents. This was noted from parents' attitudes towards resource rooms and SpLD programmes in School 1 and School 2 as discussed in Chapter five, section 5.5.

7.10 Cultural issues regarding disability in KSA

The general perception of people with disability came up as a big concern in this study, which if not addressed could be a hindrance to inclusion of students with disabilities in the regular schools. Data from this study suggested that most parents were hesitant to accept that their children had SpLD and it took a lot of convincing by the SEN teachers for them to allow their children be enrolled in the SpLD programme. Due to the stigma associated with disability because of the different myths and beliefs regarding the causes of disability, the mothers were worried about their daughters' future with regard to getting married if they were labelled as

‘disabled’ due to SpLD. They feared that their daughters would never get married if people got to know that they had a ‘disability’, and for that reason they initially refused their children to be assessed.

For SpLD programmes to be successful there is a need for the MoE to sensitize the parents on the causes of SpLD and how the difficulty can be alleviated through early identification and intervention. There should be awareness programmes in all schools, not only those with SpLD programmes, so that parents would feel free to allow their children enrolled in relevant support programmes. Data from this study suggested that fear of stigmatization for having a child with disability could be one of the major barriers to successful implementation of inclusive education. For example the Head Teacher in School 1 expressed the challenges they experienced to convince the parents to enrol their children in SpLD programmes.

We usually involve the parents by explaining to them the importance of having their children in the SpLD programmes. Some parents think their children will be considered as disabled for being in the programme which would affect their future, especially not getting married due to the ‘disability’. We inform the parents that what happens in the school is never shared with outsiders (Head Teacher, School 1, Appendix 13: 139).

Consanguinity was thought of to be as one of the possible causes of SpLD among the Saudi participants. Some of the participants stated that intermarriages with close family members was a common practice which they felt contributed hereditary factors related to causes of disability. During the interview one of the participants when asked what she thought were the causes of SpLD, mentioned marriages with close family members as one of the factors.

Teacher 2, School 2

I also think it could be caused by marriages with close relatives which is common in some families. I have noted that such families have likelihood of getting a child with disability though I am not very sure about that (Appendix 14: 206)

Genetic factors are usually considered to be one of the causes of disability among families. It is therefore very likely the practice of close relatives getting married among some of the Saudi community may lead to their offspring having a disability. Carrion-Castillo, Franke and Fisher (2013) have conducted a comprehensive research based study, which has indicated that genetic factors play a vital role in the development of dyslexia among children. However, findings like this can pave the way for functional studies into the effects of gene expression on brain development. But it does mean that talk of a 'gene for dyslexia' is misguided.

7.11 Rigid curriculum

Data collected from the teachers suggested that the curriculum was not learner-centred and did not cater for children with SpLD. The teachers lamented that if the students performed poorly they would be in trouble with the MoE and blamed for not teaching. As a result they only concentrated on average students, while the slow learners especially those with SpLD were ignored. For example Teacher 2 in School 1 was quoted saying that whenever the officers from the MoE visit their school they would complain about the poor performance of students with SpLD. They expect all students to perform the same regardless of individual differences.

...whenever they visit they want to know why the students with SpLD are not performing like the others they keep asking: Why those students couldn't pass? Why they did not obtain full mark? Why they did not master the skills? They don't care about the individual differences among the students;

they just want to see all the students pass with full marks (Teacher 2, School 1, Appendix 13: 119).

Most students with SpLD were made to repeat classes if they failed to attain the set pass mark. For instance in Section 1.5 in Chapter one I gave an example of my nephew, who was made to repeat several classes since he could not attain the pass mark. Such students eventually end up quitting school since they would be over age and would be embarrassed being in the same class with children far younger than themselves.

7.12 Lack of motivation by classroom teachers

Another factor which emerged from the data was that the classroom teachers in this study lacked motivation to accommodate students with SpLD. The teachers complained that they already had too much work, due to shortage of teachers and overpopulated classes, so they could not get extra time to support students with SpLD. Another demotivating factor was shortage of funding to equip the classes and the resource rooms, so that sometimes the teachers had to spend their own money for teaching aids. A further factor was lack of knowledge on how to deal with students with SEN. As I stated earlier, each school had only one SEN teacher, and the rest of the teachers had not been trained to teach students with special needs. Although the SEN teachers were required to sensitize their colleagues through workshops, participants in the study suggested that many teachers were unwilling to attend the workshops.

Sharma and Sokal (2015) conducted a comparative study in Australia and Canada on pre-service teachers' (PSTs) attitudes, concerns about teaching efficacy and inclusion. They examined 28 PSTs from Australia and 60 from Canada on

completing two stand-alone university courses. The pre-service teachers completed a survey at pre-and post-stages of the course. After completion of the course, the researchers found that Australian participants' attitudes improved, their concerns declined, and they became more confident in their ability to teach in inclusive classrooms. Similarly, Canadian participants' concerns declined and their teaching efficacy improved, but they became more apprehensive about teaching in inclusive classrooms. The findings of this study have clear implications for teachers' education programmes. Although the approach used in Sharma and Sokal's study may not guarantee that all teachers would have positive attitudes to inclusion, it would definitely reduce the chances of them having apprehensive attitudes.

Mortimore and Zsolnai (2015) considered the teacher as one of the most important participants of the school's social structure. As well as the classroom climate have the strongest effect on both teacher behaviours and children's social competent. For inclusive education to succeed there is a need for the MoE to ensure that there is a motivated teaching workforce by ensuring that the teachers' needs are met. Teachers in mainstream schools play a great role in the implementation of inclusive practices such that without their full cooperation and participation it would be difficult for the students with SEN to benefit in the regular schools.

7.13 Conclusion

In this chapter I discussed the research findings linking the data with the literature review. I discussed in details a range of issues concerning the educational provision of students with SpLD in two primary schools in one city in KSA. I also discussed teachers', parents' and students' with SpLD attitudes towards inclusion of students

with SpLD in regular schools, and the efforts made by the schools, the MoE and the society to create awareness regarding dyslexia.

Identification and assessment of students with SpLD were discussed in this chapter with the findings suggesting that the assessment was not consistent; hence each school had its own approach of identifying and assessing student with dyslexia. The study also revealed that assessment of dyslexia was inadequate due to lack of trained personnel and standardised assessment tools. According to the teachers who were interviewed in both schools, the SEN policy was out-dated and could not cater not only for children with SpLD but children with other disabilities as well.

Causes of dyslexia were also discussed with several factors emerging from the data. For example, the research findings revealed that besides the biological, cognitive, and behavioural causes of dyslexia, students' difficulties in reading and writing may also be the result of environmental factors, including cultural practices, family complications and social and emotional factors. The environment is thought to influence all other factors to cause reading disabilities.

Students' perception of the support given to them in the regular classroom and in the resource room and how they perceived the support they were getting from the regular teachers and the SEN teachers emerged from the data. For example, it was found that students favoured the resource room over regular classroom due to the extra support and the attention they were getting from the SEN teachers in the resource room. The students themselves stated that SEN teachers seemed to understand them more and were more patient with them when supporting them in class unlike the regular teacher whom they said gave them very little support. The

students seemed to enjoy learning in the resource room since they were more equipped with learning aids and were managed by SEN teachers.

The study revealed that due to the pressure exerted on students with dyslexia by the teachers in regular classrooms, the majority of the students lacked motivation to learn and to attend school. As a result, some students were avoiding school, or they would not participate during some lessons. On the contrary, the same students related very well with the SEN teachers and enjoyed learning in the resource room. The research findings indicate that poor learning environment and lack of support led to low motivation among students with SpLD which according to Norman and Shallice (1986) impacts negatively on the influences of the SAS which, in effect, can lead to signs of negative behaviour.

The study revealed that while on one hand some classroom teachers perceived resource rooms as essential for supporting learners with SEN because they were more equipped and that teachers could provide one to one support to the learners, on the other hand, there were teachers who considered the support given to learners in the resource room as waste of time and a setback to the work they were doing in the mainstream classrooms since pupils with SpLD were occasionally taken out for extra support. Regular teachers from both schools expressed dissatisfaction with the salary they were getting, since it was lower than that of SEN teachers, which they considered unfair. They argued that they too had children with SEN in mainstream classrooms, which was an added burden to their workload due to understaffing in schools and shortage of SEN trained teachers.

Cultural practices and religious beliefs regarding disability within the Saudi society were also discussed. There was evidence in the study that persons with disability in KSA are still viewed with misgivings despite the wide support for social inclusion within the education sector and in the religious circles. The study revealed that fear of stigmatization for having a child with disability was one of the major barriers to successful implementation of inclusive education. For example, the study revealed that teachers had hard time to convince some parents to allow their children enrolled in SEN support programmes. The parents feared that their children would be labelled as disabled which, would have adverse implications for girls since they would not get married.

Whilst this study embraced the causal modelling framework involving three levels of describing dyslexia, the biological, cognitive and behavioural (Frith, 1995), a multimodal approach was imperative to include alternative perspectives. According to Morton and Frith (1999), people should incorporate a more 'holistic' approach in determining the causes of dyslexia whilst considering all the probable environmental factors that may influence the biological, cognitive and behavioural factors. At all three levels, interactions with environmental factors such as learning opportunities, cultural attitudes and socio-economic factors have a major impact on the manifestation of dyslexia (Frith, 1997; Frith, 1999; Frederickson and Cline, 2002). Educators should therefore be able to determine the challenges faced by children which may contribute to reading difficulties and provide appropriate support.

In her model, Frith leans towards the phonological deficit theory as the link between the two other levels, whilst I acknowledge the contribution of phonological deficit to reading difficulties, data from this study indicate that the effect of environmental factors on all other levels cannot be underrated. For example, the study revealed that factors such as, poor educational background, attitudes towards persons with disability, cultural practices, family socio-economic background and religious practices were among the factors considered by the participants to contribute to reading difficulties.

Environmental factors were believed to either create barriers or alleviate the reading difficulties experienced by learners with dyslexia. For instance, assistive technology like personal computers, spellcheckers and other similar devices are known to be effective tools for supporting people with dyslexia in overcoming their difficulties. However, in Frith's framework, technology is not explicitly defined for its role in boosting self-teaching and learning mechanisms among individuals. In a classroom environment, several factors contribute towards the progress of an individual, including those with SpLD. It is imperative for a good learning environment to not only take account of the factors that promote learning, but also help in understanding individual children.

Frith (1999: 200) states that practitioners may find the causal modelling framework useful because it indicates that the behaviour in question is a product of multiple determinants. In addition, Fredrickson and Cline (2002) use the model to describe the influence of reading difficulties on individual cases. They demonstrate how the framework can represent what is known about the complex pattern of strengths and

needs of an individual and how it can guide the selection of hypotheses about which particular influences are operating and how to set up the appropriate provision.

Following the findings of this study, a multi-faceted approach for understanding dyslexia was developed which incorporated environmental factors including cultural and religious factors. However, the approach does not claim objectivity due to the small sample size. The framework developed from the data gathered for this study (see Figure 9 below) suggests that a multimodal approach would be the way forward for understanding developmental disorders. Nonetheless, although my framework may seem to add to the complexity of finding specific causes of dyslexia, this study revealed that the condition could be best explained as an interaction of multifaceted factors as shown in the figure below, consequently leading to difficulties in acquisition of literacy skills. For example, in section 2.2.1, I cited cases where a biological disorder may be as a result of cultural practices, such the case of children born from consanguineous marriages (Abu-Rabia and Maroun, 2005).

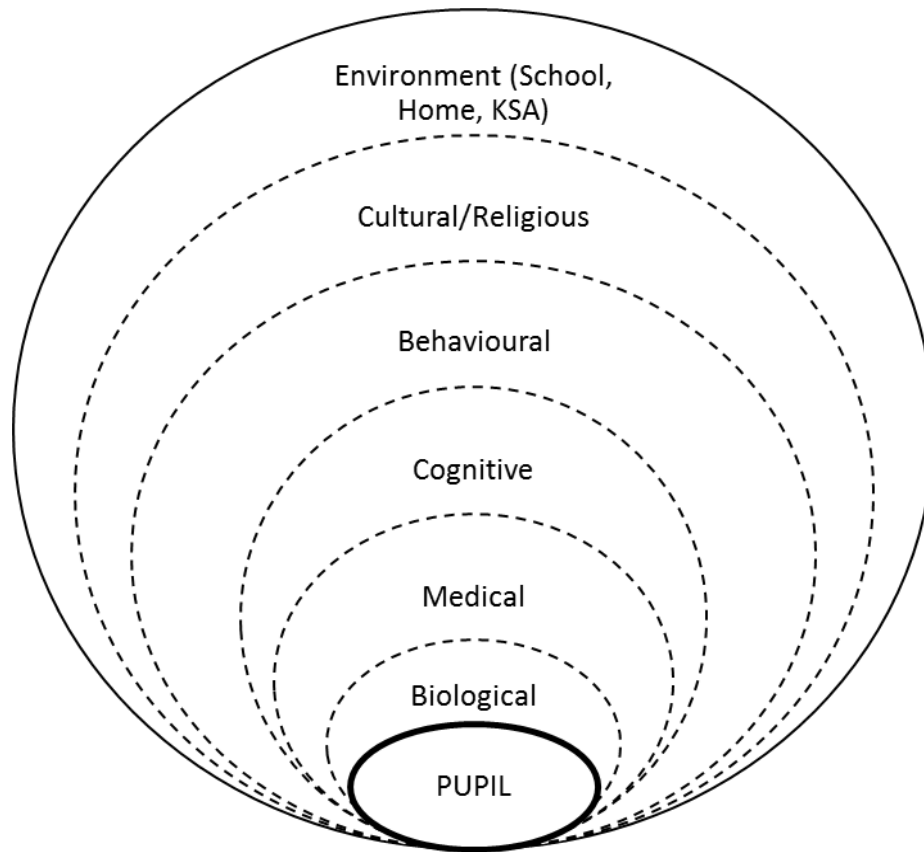


Figure 9: My Framework for Understanding Dyslexia

The figure above indicates the factors that were considered to contribute to reading difficulties following data analysis from the study. The outer solid circle represents environmental factors which as stated earlier include, educational background, diet, family, socio-economic background, cultural practices, religious beliefs and attitudes towards disabilities. The inner dotted circles signify the influence all factors have on each other to cause reading disabilities. The framework provides a multi-faceted approach to understanding dyslexia where several factors are interrelated to cause dyslexia.

In terms of the issue of dyslexia- friendly school, according to MacKay (2001: 2), ‘...

being an effective school and becoming dyslexia friendly seem to be two sides of the same coin'. In a recent journal article based on a study with participating schools in Durham, Riddick (2006) called for the adoption of dyslexia friendly practices to ensure that the needs of children with specific learning needs would be legitimately met. In the study, Riddick compared self-esteem of learners with dyslexia and their non-dyslexic peers in which the results revealed that children with dyslexia had significantly lower self-esteem. Riddick (2006) indicated that learning environments, which implicitly encourage students with dyslexia to compare themselves with their immediate peers are not helpful. Another study by Humphrey (2002, cited in Riddick, 2006), revealed that self-esteem of learners with dyslexia from the mainstream classroom was lower than that of learners with dyslexia who were in a specialist dyslexia unit. According to Riddick (2006: 146), 'for many children with specific literacy difficulties, the mainstream class is not a 'dyslexia friendly' setting'.

The questions which educators may seek answers for with regard to promoting dyslexia friendly schools are; (1) What is a dyslexia friendly school like? (2) How can an ordinary school be transformed into one that is dyslexia friendly? According to MacKay (2001), in a study undertaken in Wales, a dyslexia friendly environment is characterised by the presence of the following:

- i. Staff who are trained in 'dyslexia friendly' techniques
- ii. Use of assistive technology for supporting students with dyslexia
- iii. Specialist provision where dyslexic learners are taught by an experienced and highly qualified dyslexia specialist

- iv. Embracing multi professional team approach, including active involvement of families
- v. Extra time for specialist tuition and remedial lessons
- vi. Strong leadership from the school management
- vii. Whole school approach in supporting learners with SEN in general
- viii. A school culture of high expectation for all with consideration for individual differences and the unique needs of the learners
- ix. A school with rigorous monitoring and evaluation system

MacKay (2001) argues that effective schools value strong leadership, staff development, and the quality of instruction and learning. In such schools, all children irrespective of their individual difference and unique educational needs are given equal opportunities to reach their full potential and to develop optimally. It has been argued that ‘many of the practices advocated for a dyslexia friendly school will benefit a wide range of children and not just those children identified as having dyslexia’ (Riddick, 2006: 148).

Following a study in the UK-based schools, Riddick (2006) argues that in a school where a dyslexia friendly policy has been adopted, all teachers adopt various techniques ranging from the simplest, for example, displaying key words, giving photocopied notes, to a specific teaching technique, for example, multisensory teaching approach, which have proven useful in supporting children with dyslexia. Likewise, the use of assistive technology, such as computers and laptops are encouraged for those with literacy difficulties (see Cooke, 2001). Riddick (2006)

suggests the use of a constructive system for marking or grading, where separate marks are given for content and presentation, and students are given a choice, whether or not they want to read out loud in class. Teachers may also consider using the school's website for posting homework assignments as a form of support to students with dyslexia. Such a provision can be incorporated in the school setting in order to remove potential learning barriers amongst learners with dyslexia.

In conclusion, the concept of dyslexia-friendly schools needs to be embedded within the notion of SEN-friendly schools and general inclusive education practices. My analysis of the data gathered from the two schools of my case study revealed that although dyslexia was recognized in the schools, the teachers did not consider it as an area for special concern like other disabilities. Unlike other students with disabilities, which were physical or were quite evident, students with dyslexia were easily exempted from SEN support programmes. The issue was further complicated by the teachers who saw inclusive education as an extra burden and viewed learners with dyslexia as lazy or simply refusing to learn and the parents who adamantly refused to accept that their children needed to be enrolled in SEN support programmes due to the fear of stigmatisation. For the notion of dyslexia-friendly schools to succeed, cooperation between the teachers and parents is essential where teachers and the parents work together for a common goal.

8 CONCLUSION

8.1 Chapter overview

In this chapter I draw my conclusions from the research findings with reference to the research question and objectives. The aim of this chapter is to make sure that the research objectives have been achieved and to find out whether there were new elements in the theoretical framework. The chapter has four sections: the first section contains the conclusions, in the second section I made some recommendations following the research findings while in the third I highlight how the research findings should be disseminated in order to contribute to the educational provision for children with SpLD in KSA. The last section highlights some of the limitations to the study, although these do not affect the research outcomes.

8.2 Conclusions

Dyslexia is a controversial field of study, in that some scholars doubt whether it exists or not. Just as noted in this study, the term dyslexia is hardly used in KSA. However, the subject is not thoroughly researched in KSA hence there is little support for students with SpLD. Despite the MoE recognising that students with SpLD need extra support to reach their full potential, the data from this study indicated that only a few selected schools have support programmes for students with SpLD and even those running the programmes only a few students are enrolled for support despite being determined with SpLD.

The study suggested that there are very few support programmes for SpLD in the region despite the fact that there were very many students on the waiting list in the

school studied. According to the SEN teachers who participated, each school could only admit 18 students in the programme; hence, out of the 216 students from both schools who were identified with SpLD, only 36 of them (16.6%) were admitted in the support programmes (see Table 5 in Chapter 5), the rest were kept waiting until there were opportunities available for them. This was an indicator that there was a huge gap in the educational provision for students with SpLD in KSA.

For SpLD programmes to succeed there is a need for the MoE to ensure that they have correct data for students with SpLD, and then provide them with adequate support by recruiting more SEN teachers, and training the classroom teachers and by increasing the number of the schools with such programmes depending on the number of students in each location. In the two schools in my study, the data indicated that although the MoE was making effort to support students with SpLD, the majority of them remained neglected.

The study indicated that there were no standardised identified tools for assessing students with SpLD. According to one of the SEN teachers, they sometimes prepared their own assessment tools which they would then present to the SEN Supervisor for approval. Without standardised assessment tools it was possible that some students were misidentified, leading to either being put in the wrong programmes or being left out altogether. It is important for the MoE to ensure that there are standardised tools which can be used by all SEN teachers across the country. Such tools should be prepared by a multidisciplinary team, including SEN teachers and psychologists. It is also important to train specific personnel who could be licensed to conduct such tests just like psychologists. The MoE should

realise the harm that could be done to a child who could be misidentified with SpLD, considering the social stigma associated with disability in the country.

This research study has explored the different perspectives on dyslexia among the Saudi population and the gaps that exist in supporting students with SpLD. The study focused on Frith's model of understanding dyslexia from the biological, cognitive and behavioural/environmental perspectives. The findings of this research have indicated that biological factors such, consanguinity, diseases, and hereditary were deemed by many participants to be the common causes of SpLD. All of these factors have been extensively analysed through appropriate data collection and analysis process. For example one of the participants strongly believed that SpLD was a result of intermarriages with close relatives. Research has shown that closely related couples are likely to have children with disability. This practice was quite common among the Saudi population, however, it is important for the parents and teachers to be aware about biological causes of disabilities in general in order to minimise the prevalence of the conditions of disabilities among the Saudi population.

The findings of this research study have also focused on the cognitive perspective of dyslexia. The study suggests that the students with SpLD were considered by teachers and parents to have challenges related to cognitive skills which consequently led to difficulties in reading, and writing as well as in memory. The findings of the study suggest that the increased awareness among the parents and teachers about the cognitive perspective may result in better understanding of how

to support such students since teachers and parents would become aware about the existing or possible difficulties in learning among students with SpLD.

Environmental factors also featured prominently from the data collected in this study. The study suggests that the students with SpLD studied were hardly getting support from home and school since some parents and teachers thought that the children were 'lazy' or just 'spoilt'. The school was not supportive as such either. While the students with SpLD in this study stated that they were very comfortable in the resource room, all of them stated that the teachers in the regular classes considered them as 'lazy' and often embarrassed them in front of their colleagues. This resulted with the rest of the students in schools making fun of them consequently resulting either in truancy or engaging in fights with other students. The study suggests the need for collaboration between the SEN teachers, the classroom teachers and rest of the students in supporting those with SpLD if they were to make schools welcoming for students with SpLD. The parents on the other hand needed to be sensitised on SpLD so that they too can be supporting their children at home.

The findings of this research study have further focused on the behavioural perspective of dyslexia. The study indicated that the behaviour of students with SpLD children is directly associated with the negative attitudes of other children or teachers towards them due to poor performance at school. The study seems to indicate that most students with SpLD were regarded as 'lazy', or just refusing to learn. As a result they might end up refusing to attend school to avoid the embarrassment.

The study suggests that there were very few trained teachers in SEN. For example in the schools where data was collected each had one SEN teacher who was responsible for supporting students with SpLD. As a result most of the students were kept on the waiting list in both schools studied. There was a need for the MoE to either recruit more trained teachers or to provide in-service courses to the classroom teachers so that they could be more effective in supporting children with SEN. One of the Head Teachers complained about the level of education in her school when she said that most of the teachers in her school had qualified many years ago with only a certificate in teacher education. She preferred that the MoE would employ young graduates with the current knowledge and skills.

Shortage of teachers in schools was cited as a major problem in KSA. All the teachers who were interviewed in this study complained that the workload was too much for them such it was difficult for them to cater for students with SpLD in the regular classes. Classroom teachers from School 1 felt that having students with SpLD in the regular classes was an extra burden to already congested classes. They preferred that such students be taught in separate classes by SEN teachers. The teachers complained that they hardly had break time since their timetables were very congested due to shortage of teachers hence they had to take more subjects than they should normally have.

Cultural practices and beliefs were also cited as barriers to inclusive education. For example the parents who interviewed in this study were hesitant to give consent for their children to be assessed because they feared that they would be labelled as disabled. In KSA it is hard for a girl with disability to get married because she is

seen as unproductive and possibly a burden. The family with a child with SpLD is also viewed with a lot of suspicion because of the cultural and traditional beliefs regarding the causes of disabilities which are seen either as a curse or a punishment for something wrong the family did. As a result most parents would even hide their children with disability rather than take them to school, to avoid getting exposed to the society. There is a need for the government particularly the MoE to sensitise the general population that a disability can occur to anyone, and for different reasons, including accidents.

Teachers' and students' attitude towards children with SpLD was noted as another barrier to inclusive education. The four students in this study stated that they were quite often ridiculed by the classroom teachers in class if they were unable to read. This behaviour by the teachers encouraged the other students to bully those with SpLD and mock them in class. There is a need for teachers to build inclusive practices within their classrooms and in the schools. Data from this study suggests that neither of the schools had an internal policy on how to support students with SpLD, which meant they were just ignored. There is a need for the MoE to take the leading role to ensure that students with SpLD were not bullied in regular schools.

Data from this study suggests that there was no clear policy document on the support for students with SpLD. According to the SEN Supervisor the existing SEN policy was out-dated and needed to be revised. The study also seems to indicate that even the existing SEN policy was not effectively implemented in the studied schools due to lack of follow-up by the MoE. For instance although the SEN Supervisor stated that she made sure that all schools had a copy of the SEN policy,

the classroom teachers who were interviewed said that they never had any SEN policy document in the schools. Lack of a clear SEN policy and lack of inspection by the MoE left teachers to focus on the students whom they viewed as less demanding, hence ignoring the students with SpLD. There is a need for the MoE to prepare clear policies on the implementation of inclusive education and to ensure that the policies are implemented by conducting regular inspections.

Lack of support and supervision from the MoE was cited as another barrier to the provision for students with SpLD. The SEN teachers who were interviewed in this study stated that they were hardly given any support by the SEN supervisors, and even when they visited, they gave them little advice on how they should support students with SpLD. According to the classroom teachers and the SEN teachers, they felt that they needed more guidance from the SEN supervisor for them to be more competent. There is a need for the MoE to address that issue if the programmes for supporting students with SpLD are to succeed. Without supervision the teachers are likely to ignore the students with SpLD since they view them as an extra burden.

8.3 Recommendations

Data from this study suggests that the educational provision for students with SpLD in KSA needs to be improved. During the interviews with the participants I asked them what proposals they would make for improving the education of children with SpLD. The following are some of the recommendations made by the participants including my own recommendations emerging from the gaps identified in meeting the educational needs for students with SpLD. It is my opinion that if these

recommendations are taken into consideration by the MoE, more students with SpLD would benefit from SpLD programmes and it would also lead to successful implementation of inclusive education for children with SEN in general.

1. More training for classroom teachers and SEN teachers as well. Classroom teachers should be provided with more training to help them understand the students' difficulties and identify their weaknesses and know how to teach them, and deal with them in an inclusive classroom, instead of excluding them.
2. Creating awareness among the parents for them to understand how to support their children with SpLD instead of assuming that they were 'lazy' or 'spoilt'. This can be done through workshops organised by the schools or through other forums.
3. Recruitment of more teachers, including SEN teachers, in order to reduce the workload for teachers. The study suggests that only a few students were enrolled in SpLD programmes due to shortage of trained teachers in SEN.
4. Recruitment of teaching assistants, especially in regular schools, so that they could offer support to the students with SpLD in the classroom while the classroom teacher supports the rest of the students.
5. The MoE to provide more funds for SpLD programmes. For instance the SEN teachers stated that in some cases they were forced to buy equipment for the resource rooms from their pockets because the money they received from the government was not adequate.

6. The MoE to prepare a clear SEN policy which would cater for all students with SEN and to ensure the policies are implemented by the teachers through close supervision and regular inspection.
7. The MoE to prepare standardised assessment tools for SpLD to ensure uniformity in the identification and assessment of students with SpLD.
8. The MoE to ensure assessment of students with SpLD and other disabilities is conducted by a multidisciplinary team of professionals including the parents.
9. Collaboration between the teachers, parents and other professional in supporting students with SpLD. For instance the study suggests that the parents and classroom teachers were hardly involved during the preparation of IEPs.
10. The support programmes for students with SpLD to be extended to intermediary and secondary schools, and to higher education like colleges and universities.

8.4 Future research

Based on the research findings and limitations associated with case studies, such as the challenge of generalisability of the research findings, further research would be necessary with a wider and more representative sample drawn across the country, including more primary and secondary schools (private and public) for both boys and girls. The study should also include fathers and mothers as well as male and female teachers; more officers from the MoE, more SEN teachers and student advisors, including teaching assistants. Such a study would provide data from a

more representative sample which can be useful for policy implementation to promote inclusive education for learners with SpLD in KSA.

The proposed study should investigate factors such as; (1) parental involvement, including mothers and fathers in identifying, assessing and supporting young people and children with dyslexia, in KSA; (2) teachers' experience in dealing with parents of children with SpLD in primary and secondary education; (3) the influence of cultural and religious beliefs and practices in KSA on inclusive education. Finally, (4) the study should examine how SEN policy can be improved to ensure that children with SpLD and other children with disabilities are not marginalised.

8.5 Study limitations

It is extremely necessary to mention the cultural issues which were evident from the data and during the data collection process. The first issue which I faced during data collection was that due to cultural and religious beliefs, I could not include male participants in this research study. For that reason, being female, I could not be allowed to collect data from the boys' schools. Therefore, the data for this study was gathered from female participants including the parents since I could not include the male parents. Nonetheless, this factor, although a limitation to the study does not affect the research findings. I strongly believe that whether the participants were male or female or both, the results of the study would still be the same.

8.6 Dissemination of research findings

According to Cohen et al., (2007), for research to be meaningful, the choice of channels to be used in the dissemination of the research findings is very important. They further argue that ‘the degree of influence exerted by research depends on careful dissemination...Researchers must cultivate ways of influencing policy, particularly when policy-makers can simply ignore research findings...’ (p.46). The findings of this study will be disseminated through presentations at conferences, seminars and workshops, as well as through online publications in educational journals and by making the final thesis available to the MoE in KSA and in the library at the University of Birmingham.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Letter to Education Officer

	<p>INFORMATION SHEET (Ministry officer)</p> <p>خطاب (مديرة قسم التربية الخاصة)</p> <p>عزيزتي مديرة قسم التربية الخاصة- صعوبات التعلم في إدارة التطعيم و التعليم بمدينة جده ،</p> <p>أنا الباحثة المعيدة/ ليلى الشريف، ممتكة من جامعة الملك عبدالعزيز إلى جامعة برمنجهام- المملكة المتحدة- بصدد إجراء بحث علمي كمتطلب للحصول على درجة الدكتوراه. يتناول هذا البحث دراسة وصفية تحليلية إثنو بيولوجية لفئة صعوبات التعلم في المدارس الابتدائية بمدينة جدة ودراسة الخدمات المقدمة لهم في هذه المدارس. كما يتضمن تحليل وجهات النظر والآراء حول بعض المفاهيم المتعلقة بصعوبات التعلم. سوف يتم تسليط الضوء بشكل خاص على فئة من صعوبات التعلم لديها صعوبة في القراءة والكتابة والتهجئة تعرف بـ العسر القرائي أو (الدسليكسيا). الدراسة سوف يتم تطبيقها في مدارس البنات الابتدائية التي تطبق برامج صعوبات التعلم بمدينة جدة وذلك للتعرف على طرق وأساليب التدريس المتبعة في هذه المدارس من جهة، والتعرف على مدى فهم واستيعاب اللجنة المقصودة لمفهوم صعوبات التعلم والعسر القرائي من جهة أخرى. قد تخدم الدراسة فئة تكون مجهولة أو تعاني من قتل دراسي متكرر بسبب عدم الوعي أو معرفة أسباب هذا القتل.</p> <p>الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو لغرض البحث العلمي ومن أجل نشر الوعي وتنقيف المجتمع حول ماهية هذه الصعوبة ومن أجل تقديم أفضل الخدمات لمن يعانون من العسر القرائي سواء في المدارس أو في المجتمع بشكل عام.</p> <p>تشتمل هذه الدراسة على زيارات ميدانية استطلاعية لمدرستين من المدارس التي تطبق برامج صعوبات التعلم في مدينة جدة للبنات وتتضمن التفاعلات التالية:</p> <p>أولاً: إجراء مقابلات مع أعضاء الهيئة التدريسية في المدارس المعنية بالزيارة وتشتمل المقابلات مديرات المدارس، معلمات الصف، معلمات صعوبات التعلم، المرشدة الطلابية، بعض الطالبات من ذوي صعوبات التعلم وأولياء الأمور إن أمكن، للتعرف على وجهات النظر حول بعض المفاهيم المتعلقة بصعوبات التعلم.</p> <p>ثانياً: زيارات للفصول الدراسية للملاحظة، مع العلم أن هذه الزيارات ليس الهدف منها تقييم أداء المعلمة إنما الهدف منها هو ملاحظة تفاعل الطالبات من ذوي صعوبات التعلم داخل الفصل مع المعلمة ومع باقي الطالبات. أيضاً ملاحظة طرق التدريس المتبعة داخل الفصل العادي.</p> <p>ثالثاً: زيارات لغرف المصادر لملاحظة ومتابعة الطالبات من ذوي صعوبات التعلم داخل غرف المصادر وتفاعلهم مع معلمة صعوبات التعلم، أيضاً ملاحظة طرق التدريس المتبعة داخل غرف المصادر.</p> <p>رابعاً: إجراء مقابلة مع مسؤولة قسم التربية الخاصة- صعوبات التعلم في إدارة التربية والتعليم بمدينة جدة للتعرف على الخدمات والدعم المقدم للمدارس من قبل الإدارة، أيضاً التعرف على لوائح وأنظمة التعليم الخاصة بهذه الفئات وكيفية تطبيقها على أرض الواقع.</p> <p>خامساً: إجراء مقابلات مع المعلمات المتدربات في قسم الدبلوم العالي- التربية الخاصة في جامعة الملك عبدالعزيز للتعرف على وجهات نظرهم و آرائهم حول بعض المفاهيم المتعلقة بصعوبات التعلم والخدمات المقدمة لهذه الفئة.</p>
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لطفاً ارجب أن تشاركيني هذا البحث لكونك مسؤولة قسم التربية الخاصة - صعوبات التعلم في إدارة التربية و التعليم بمدينة جدة. أترك جيداً حجم العمل الذي لديك ومدى انشغالك وأقدر مشاركتك في دراستي ولكن أؤكد أن لا أخذ من وقتك إلا القليل.

أنا أطمح أن تكتني لي بمقابلتك مرتين (كل مقابلة قد تستغرق حوالي ساعة). في المقابلة الأولى سأتعرف على معلومات عامة وشاملة عن بعض القضايا المتعلقة بصعوبات التعلم و برامج صعوبات التعلم في المدارس الابتدائية بمدينة جدة. أيضاً أود التعرف على دورك كمسؤولة في إدارة التربية و التعليم في دعم الطالبات من ذوي صعوبات التعلم ومعلومات صعوبات التعلم. المقابلة الثانية ستكون استكمالاً ولتغطية بعض الأمور أو الاسئلة التي لم تكتمل اجاباتها. أود أن ألتق انتباهك إلى حقك في حذف والغاء أي من الإجابات أو البيانات التي تجديها حساسة. كما المقابلتين سيتم تسجيلها باستخدام مسجل خاص لذلك، وسوف يتم بطريقة سليمة وخاصة للحفاظ على سرية المعلومات والحفاظ على هويتك.

ولضمان خصوصيتك لن يتم التعرف على بياناتك في هذا البحث حيث أنني سأقوم باستخدام الرموز عوضاً عن الأسماء الحقيقية ولك حرية الانسحاب في أي مرحلة قبل أو أثناء جمع البيانات. بياناتك سوف يتم إزالتها إذا كان الانسحاب خلال شهرين من تاريخ جمع البيانات. المعلومات التي سوف أجمعها ستكون سرية وخاصة وسوف يتم استخدامها فقط لغرض البحث العلمي.

أخيراً إذا كنت تترغبين في الحصول على ملخص لنتائج هذا البحث عند الإنتهاء من تحليل البيانات أو إذا كان لديك أي تساؤلات حول هذه الدراسة في أي مرحلة الرجاء التواصل معي أو مع المشرفة الأكاديمية على هذا البحث.

مشاركتك في هذا البحث مهمة جداً بالنسبة لي وسوف تكون محل تقدير كبير لي..

شاكراً لك حسن تعاونك وجزاك الله خيراً

الباحثة:

أ/ ليلى الشريف

البريد الإلكتروني:
جول

مشرقة البحث:

د/ ديردري مارتن (Deirdre Martin)

هاتف

Appendix 2: Letter to work



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

سعادة نائبة المشرف على برنامج الدراسات التربوية العليا

حفظها الله

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته،

وبعد،

أُتقدم أنا الباحثة المعينة /إيلي الشريف بطلب رحلة علمية وذلك من أجل تطبيق أدوات البحث وجمع بيانات بحث الدكتوراه التي أقوم بإعدادها في الوقت الراهن وقد تم اختيار مدينة جدة عينة للتطبيق. البحث يهدف إلى تسليط الضوء على فئة من صعوبات التعلم لديها صعوبة في القراءة والكتابة والتهجئة تعرف بـ الحس القرائي أو (الديسليكسيا). الدراسة سوف يتم تطبيقها في المدارس الابتدائية التي تطبق برامج صعوبات التعلم وذلك للتعرف على طرق وأساليب التدريس المتبعة في هذه المدارس من جهة، والتعرف على مدى فهم واستيعاب العينة المقصودة لمفهوم صعوبات التعلم والعسر القرائي من جهة أخرى.

التطبيق الفعلي للدراسة سوف يبدأ مع بدء العام الدراسي الجديد 1434/ 1435 هـ، وسوف يستغرق ١٢ أسبوع. تم تعديل بعض التواريخ السابق تقديمها وذلك بناء على بعض المستجدات التي حدثت على البحث وسوف يتم إجراء دراسة استطلاعية خلال الفصل الدراسي الحالي 1433/1434 هـ وسوف تستغرق شهر واحد. الهدف من هذه الدراسة الاستطلاعية هو التحقق من صدق وثبات أدوات البحث والتأكد من جمع البيانات المطلوبة للبحث العلمي حتى يتسنى للباحثة التعديل في حالة حصول خطأ قبل البدء في جمع البيانات الفعلية.

مرفق لسعادتك خطة البحث مضمنة فيها ملخص للنشاطات التي سوف أقوم بها خلال فترة التطبيق .

أرجوا من سعادتك قبول طلبي هذا ولكم خالص شكري

والله ولي التوفيق

مقدمته الباحثة /إيلي الشريف


For any enquiries please contact me at:

Alsharif, Layla
Postgraduate Researcher
School of Education
University of Birmingham

Appendix 3: Letter from the MoE

<p>الرقم : ١٢٨٨ / ٤ / ١٤٤٤ هـ التاريخ : المرفقات :</p>	<p>بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم</p>  <p>وزارة التعليم Ministry of Education</p>	<p>المملكة العربية السعودية وزارة التربية والتعليم (٢٨٠)</p>
<p>الإدارة العامة للتربية والتعليم بمحافظة بجدة إدارة التخطيط والتطوير</p>		
<p>إلى : المكرمة مديرة إدارة التربية الخاصة من : مديرة إدارة التخطيط والتطوير بشأن : تسهيل مهمة المبتعثة الباحثة / ليلي مبارك الشريف السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته ، وبعد :</p>		
<p>بالإشارة إلى إحالة سعادة المدير العام للتربية والتعليم بمحافظة جدة ذي الرقم ٣٤٦١٩٨٤٠ وتاريخ ١٤٣٤/٤/٣هـ المبنية على خطاب المبتعثة الباحثة / ليلي مبارك الشريف بجامعة بمرنجهام بالمملكة المتحدة ؛ بشأن طلب تسهيل مهمتها في تطبيق بحثها بعنوان "دراسة طرق التدريس والخدمات التربوية المقدمة لفئة صعوبات التعلم (العسر القرائي) / الديسلكسيا في المدارس الابتدائية بمدينة جدة: دراسة حالة أنثروبولوجية" كمتطلب تكميلي للحصول على درجة الدكتوراه في تخصص التربية الخاصة/ صعوبات التعلم ، وترغب الباحثة في تطبيق أدوات بحثها "أسئلة مقابلة" على عينة من مديرات المدارس الابتدائية (برنامج صعوبات التعلم) ومعلمات الصف ومعلمات صعوبات التعلم ومرشدة الطالبات وبعض الطالبات من ذوي صعوبات التعلم (العسر القرائي) وأولياء الأمور ، وقوائم ملاحظة على الطالبات في فصولهن كذلك ترغب الباحثة في إجراء المقابلة مع مديرة إدارة التربية الخاصة ، حيث تم الاطلاع على خطة الباحثة وأسئلة المقابلة وتبين استيفائها ضوابط الوزارة بهذا الخصوص.</p> <p>نأمل منكم التكرم بالتعاون مع الباحثة في مهمتها لديكم وتقديم التسهيلات والمعلومات التي تحتاج إليها الى تاريخ الانتهاء من البحث ، شاكرين ومقدرين اهتمامكم بالبحث العلمي .</p> <p>والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته</p>		
<p>وسيلة بنت عمر با موسى مديرة إدارة التخطيط والتطوير ١٤٤٤/٤/١٢</p>		<p>١٤٤٤/٤/١٢</p>

Appendix 4: Letter to SEN Teacher



INFORMATION SHEET (SEN teacher)

خطاب (معلمة صعوبات التعلم)

عزيزتي معلمة صعوبات التعلم،

أنا الباحثة المجدة/ ليلي الشريف، مئحة من جامعة الملك عبدالعزيز إلى جامعة برمنغهام - المملكة المتحدة- بصدد إجراء بحث علمي كمتطلب للحصول على درجة الدكتوراه. يتناول هذا البحث دراسة وصفية تحليلية التربولوجية لفئة صعوبات التعلم في المدارس الابتدائية بمدينة جدة ودراسة الخدمات المقدمة لهم في هذه المدارس. كما يتضمن تحليل وجهات النظر والآراء حول بعض المفاهيم المتعلقة بصعوبات التعلم. سوف يتم تسليط الضوء بشكل خاص على فئة من صعوبات التعلم لديها صعوبة في القراءة والكتابة والتهجئة تعرف بالحس القرائي أو (الديسليكسيا). الدراسة سوف يتم تطبيقها في مدارس اليازات الإبتدائية التي تطبق برامج صعوبات التعلم بمدينة جدة وذلك للتعرف على طرق وأساليب التدريس المتبعة في هذه المدارس من جهة، والتعرف على مدى فهم واستيعاب اللجنة المقصودة لمفهوم صعوبات التعلم والحس القرائي من جهة أخرى. قد تكون الدراسة فئة تكون مجهولة أو تعاني من قتل دراسي متكرر بسبب عدم الوعي أو معرفة أسباب هذا القتل.

الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو لغرض البحث العلمي ومن أجل نشر الوعي وتكثيف المجتمع حول ما هية هذه الصعوبة ومن أجل تقديم أفضل الخدمات لمن يعانون من الحس القرائي سواء في المدارس أو في المجتمع بشكل عام.

تشتمل هذه الدراسة على زيارات ميدانية استطلاعية لمدرستين من المدارس التي تطبق برامج صعوبات التعلم في مدينة جدة للبيانات وتتضمن النشاطات التالية:

أولاً: إجراء مقابلات مع أعضاء الهيئة التدريسية في المدارس المعنية بالزيارة وتشمل المقابلات مديرات المدارس، معلمات الصف، معلمات صعوبات التعلم، المرشدة الطلابية، بعض الطالبات من ذوي صعوبات التعلم وأولياء الأمور إن أمكن، للتعرف على وجهات النظر حول بعض المفاهيم المتعلقة بصعوبات التعلم.

ثانياً: زيارات للفصول الدراسية للملاحظة، مع العلم أن هذه الزيارات ليس لهدف منها تقييم أداء المعلمة إنما لهدف منها هو ملاحظة تفاعل الطالبات من ذوي صعوبات التعلم داخل الفصل مع المعلمة ومع باقي الطالبات. أيضاً ملاحظة طرق التدريس المتبعة داخل الفصل العادي.

ثالثاً: زيارات لغرف المصادر لملاحظة ومتابعة الطالبات من ذوي صعوبات التعلم داخل غرف المصادر وتفاعلهن مع معلمة صعوبات التعلم، أيضاً ملاحظة طرق التدريس المتبعة داخل غرف المصادر.

رابعاً: إجراء مقابلة مع مسؤولة قسم التربية الخاصة- صعوبات التعلم في إدارة التعليم بمدينة جدة للتعرف على الخدمات والدعم المقدم للمدارس من قبل الإدارة، أيضاً التعرف على لوائح وأنظمة التعليم الخاصة بهذه الفئة وكيفية تطبيقها على أرض الواقع.

خامساً: إجراء مقابلات مع المعلمات المتدربات في قسم الدبلوم العالي- التربية الخاصة في جامعة الملك عبدالعزيز للتعرف على وجهات نظرهم وآرائهم حول بعض المفاهيم المتعلقة بصعوبات التعلم والخدمات المقدمة لهذه الفئة.

INFORMATION SHEET (SEN teacher)

لطفاً ارجب أن تشاركيني هذا البحث لكونك معلمة صعوبات التعلم هذه المدرسة. أدرك جيداً حجم العمل الذي لديك ومدى استغالك وأقدر مشاركتك في دراستي ولكن أعني أن لا أخذ من وقتك إلا القليل.

فأسمح أن ألتقي لي بمقابلتك مرتين (كل مقابلة قد تستغرق حوالي ساعة). في المقابلة الأولى سأعرف على معلومات عامة وشاملة عن بعض القضايا المتعلقة بصعوبات التعلم و برنامج صعوبات التعلم في مدرستك. أيضاً أود التعرف على دورك كمعلمة صعوبات تعلم في دعم الطالبات من ذوي صعوبات التعلم. المقابلة الثانية ستكون استكمالاً وتغطية بعض الأمور أو الأسئلة التي لم تكتمل أجابها. أود أن ألفت انتباهك إلى حفظك في حذف والغاء أي من الإجابات أو البيانات التي تجديها حساسة. كلا المقابلتين سيتم تسجيلها باستخدام مسجل خاص لذلك، وسوف يتم بطريقة سليمة وخاصة للحفاظ على سرية المعلومات والحفاظ على هويتك.

أيضاً بعد الحصول على إبتكك سأقوم بإجراء ملاحظات داخل غرفة المصادر وتدوينها في مودونة خاصة ولك حق الإطلاع على هذه المودونة في أي وقت.

ولضمان خصوصيتك لن يتم التعرف على بيبكك في هذا البحث حيث ألتني سأقوم باستخدام الرموز عوضاً عن الأسماء الحقيقية ولك حرية الإحتساب في أي مرحلة قبل أو أثناء جمع البيانات. بيبكك سوف يتم إزالتها إذا كان الإحتساب خلال شهرين من تاريخ جمع البيانات. المعلومات التي سوف أجمعها ستكون سرية وخاصة وسوف يتم استخدامها فقط لغرض البحث العلمي.

أخراً إذا كنت ترغبين في الحصول على ملخص لنتائج هذا البحث عند الإنتهاء من تحليل البيانات أو إذا كان لديك أي تساؤلات حول هذه الدراسة في أي مرحلة الرجاء التواصل معي أو مع المشرفة الأكاديمية على هذا البحث.

مشارككك في هذا البحث مهمة جداً بالنسبة لي وسوف تكون محل تقدير كبير لي.

شاكراً لك حسن تعاونك وجزاك الله خيراً

الباحثة :

أ/ ليلي الشريف

البريد الإلكتروني:

جوال:

مترفة البحث:

د/ ديردري مارتين (Deirdre Martin)

ماتف

Appendix 5: Letter to Parents



خطاب إبن (ولي الأمر)

عزیزتی الأم، الأب (الوصی)

أبعث لك هذا الخطاب لأقدم لك نفسي وأطلب موافقتك على مشاركة ابنك في مشروع بحثي الذي أقوم به في الوقت الراهن. أنا الباحثة ليلي الشریف، باحثة دكتوراة في كلية التربية جامعة برمنجهام، بريطانيا. ومعينة جامعة الملك عبدالعزيز في قسم التربية الخاصة، برنامج الدبلوم العالي. أقوم بإجراء بحث متعلق بمناقشة قضايا حول الخدمات التربوية وأساليب التدريس المنبجعة في المدارس الابتدائية بمدينة جدة والتي تطبق برامج لصعوبات التعلم. الدراسة سوف تسلط الضوء على الطالبات اللاتي يعانين من العصر القرائي أو من لديهن صعوبات في القراءة أو ما يعرف بالسلوكيات. لقد تم منحني ترخيص بإجراء هذا البحث في مدرسة ابنك وأقضى الوقت حالياً في المدرسة للتعرف أكثر على الطالبات وما يقومون به بشكل يومي داخل الفصل وغرفة المصادر. بالتعاون مع معلمة الفصل ومعلمة صعوبات التعلم، أود التحدث مع عدد قليل من الطالبات اللاتي يعانين من صعوبات في القراءة أو ما يعرف بالعصر القرائي من أجل التعرف على المشكلات اللاتي يعانين منها عن قرب ودراستها بشكل علمي ومحاولة إيجاد الحلول المناسب لها. سوف يتضمن ذلك إجراء مقابلة شخصية قصيرة خارج الفصل لا تزيد عن ٣٠ دقيقة. أرجو موافقتكم على مقابلة ابنك من أجل إكمال هذا البحث. أؤكد لكم أن مضمون هذه المقابلة سيبقى سري ولن يطلع عليه أحداً بخلاف الباحثة. كما أؤكد لكم أيضاً أنني سوف أسأل ابنك عن ما إذا كانت سعيدة بإجراء المقابلة.

في حالة وجود أي مخاوف أو تساؤلات لديكم أرجو عدم التردد في الإتصال بي في المدرسة و التواصل معي بشكل شخصي. وفي حالة طلب أي معلومات أخرى إضافية عن جوانب معينة في هذا البحث أو في حالة وجود أي مخاوف أو مرئيات تابعة من مشاركة ابنك في هذه الدراسة أرجو الاتصال بالمشرقة على بحثي في جامعة برمنجهام وهي:

د/ ديردري مارتين.

مع شكري الجزيل لأخذكم طريقي هذا بعين الإعتبار وأتطلع لتلقي الرد منكم.
الباحثة:

أ/ ليلي الشریف

البريد الإلكتروني:
جوال

مشرقة البحث:

د/ ديردري مارتين (Deirdre Martin)

هاتف


- ☐ أوافق على مشاركة ابنتي في هذه الدراسة.
☐ لا أوافق على مشاركة ابنتي في هذه الدراسة.

الإسم:


التوقيع:

شافرة لك حسن تعاونك وجعل الله هذا العمل في ميزان حسناتك


Appendix 6: Consent Form for Ministry Officer

 UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM	Consent form (Ministry officer)
<p>Dear Ministry officer,</p> <p>I am Layla Alsharif, a PhD researcher with the School of Education, University of Birmingham, UK. I am conducting a research on issues relating to the educational provision for Students with dyslexia in primary schools in Saudi Arabia. As a lecturer in the field of Special Education in King Abdul Aziz University in Jeddah, I would like you, gladly to participate in my research.</p> <p>The purpose of my study is to examine the strategies applied by teachers in supporting students with dyslexia achieve their full potential in education.</p> <p>With this in mind, I would like to your permission to interview you for an hour. Kindly, I would like discuss some issues on the educational programmes in primary schools in Jeddah with you. Also, I would like to ask you some questions about provision and the governmental policies on dyslexia. In addition to this, I would like to clarify your role as a Ministry officer in support to the students with dyslexia and SEN teachers.</p> <p>You have the right to not participate in this research study. It is completely your own decision but I do hope, for the sake of the young learners who could benefit from such research, that you honour me by taking part in my study. If you change your mind after the interviews, you may withdraw from the study at any time, especially if the withdrawal is within two months from the date of data collection and your data and information will be removed. I must assure you that the information collected will be kept confidential and your name will not be reflected in any research reports.</p> <p>For any information or queries regarding my research project and its findings, please feel free to contact me or my supervisor at:</p> <p><u>Researcher:</u></p> <p>Layla Alsharif</p> <p><u>Research supervisors</u></p> <p>Dr. Deirdre Martin School of Education, University of Birmingham</p>	
<div><input type="checkbox"/> I agree to participate in this research study. I have read the complete information given in the consent form and I understand that my given information will be kept confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this research study. I also understand that despite my agreement to participate, I can withdraw from the research at any time without giving reason, and my data will be removed if it is within two months to the date of data collection.</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> I don't agree to participate in this research.</div> <div>Name:</div> <div>Signature:</div> <div>Thank you for giving your time</div>	

Appendix 7: Consent Form for the Head Teacher

 UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM	Consent form (head-teacher)
Dear head-teacher,	
<p>I am Layla Alsharif, a PhD researcher with the School of Education, University of Birmingham, UK. I am conducting a research on issues relating to the educational provision for Students with dyslexia in primary schools in Saudi Arabia. As a lecturer in the field of Special Education in King Abdul Aziz University in Jeddah, I would like you, gladly to participate in my research.</p>	
<p>The purpose of my study is to examine the strategies applied by teachers in supporting students with dyslexia achieve their full potential in education.</p>	
<p>With this in mind, I would like to your permission to visit your school in the Spring/Summer 2012/13 term for six weeks to carry out a small, but significant aspect of my research. My research should include interviews with you, the school' SEN teacher and an observation of her lessons in the resource-room. In addition, there will also be interviews with one classroom teacher along with observations of her lessons, interviews with the student advisor and interviews with two students with reading and writing difficulties in one of their classes and their parents if possible.</p>	
<p>You have the right to not participate in this research study. It is completely your own decision but I do hope, for the sake of the young learners who could benefit from such research, that you honour me by taking part in my study. If you change your mind after the interviews, you may withdraw from the study at any time, especially if the withdrawal is within two months from the date of data collection and your data and information will be removed. I must assure you that the information collected will be kept confidential and your name will not be reflected in any research reports.</p>	
<p>For any information or queries regarding my research project and its findings, please feel free to contact me or my supervisor at:</p>	
<u>Researcher:</u>	
Layla Alsharif	
<u>Research supervisors</u>	
Dr. Deirdre Martin	
School of Education, University of Birmingham	
<div><input type="checkbox"/> I agree to participate in this research study. I have read the complete information given in the consent form and I understand that my given information will be kept confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this research study. I also understand that despite my agreement to participate, I can withdraw from the research at any time without giving reason, and my data will be removed if it is within two months to the date of data collection.</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> I don't agree to participate in this research.</div>	
Name:	
Signature:	
Thank you for giving your time	

Appendix 8: Consent Form for Parents

	Consent form (Parents)
<p>Dear parent,</p> <p>I am Layla Alsharif, a PhD researcher with the School of Education, University of Birmingham, UK. I am conducting a research on issues relating to the educational provision for Students with dyslexia in primary schools in Saudi Arabia. As a lecturer in the field of Special Education in King Abdul Aziz University in Jeddah, I would like you, gladly to participate in my research.</p> <p>The purpose of my study is to examine the strategies applied by teachers in supporting students with dyslexia achieve their full potential in education.</p> <p>With this in mind, I would like to your permission to interview you for an hour. Kindly, I would like discuss some issues on dyslexia with you. Also, I would like to ask you some questions about the educational programme and your role as a parent in support of your child at home.</p> <p>You have the right to not participate in this research study. It is completely your own decision but I do hope, for the sake of the young learners who could benefit from such research, that you honour me by taking part in my study. If you change your mind after the interviews, you may withdraw from the study at any time, especially if the withdrawal is within two months from the date of data collection and your data and information will be removed. I must assure you that the information collected will be kept confidential and your name will not be reflected in any research reports.</p> <p>For any information or queries regarding my research project and its findings, please feel free to contact me or my supervisor at:</p> <p><u>Researcher:</u></p> <p>Layla Alsharif</p> <p><u>Research supervisors</u></p> <p>Dr. Deirdre Martin School of Education, University of Birmingham</p>	
<div><div><input type="checkbox"/> I agree to participate in this research study. I have read the complete information given in the consent form and I understand that my given information will be kept confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this research study. I also understand that despite my agreement to participate, I can withdraw from the research at any time without giving reason, and my data will be removed if it is within two months to the date of data collection.</div><div><input type="checkbox"/> I don't agree to participate in this research.</div></div> <div>Name:</div> <div>Signature:</div> <div>Thank you for giving your time</div>	

Appendix 9: Interview Guide for SEN Supervisor

1. What is your role in the MoE?
2. How long have you been in this position?
3. What qualifications are required for someone to hold this position?
4. Can you please tell me about the educational programmes for students with SpLD in primary school in Jeddah? (Do all the school have these programmes?)
5. Is there a policy on SpLD programmes? (If yes - How does the MoE ensure that the policy is implemented in all the school?)
6. Do you consider the policy on SpLD effective? (Probe for more information)
7. What does SpLD mean to you?
8. What do you think are the courses of SpLD?
9. On average how many SEN teachers are there per school in Jeddah?
10. Do you consider than number adequate?
11. Can you please describe the identification and assessment procedure for students with SpLD? (Probe about the methods and staff involved)
12. What is your opinion about the assessment done to students with SpLD? (Do you consider it adequate?)
13. What is the difference between the resource room and the regular classroom? (How often are students required to use the resource room in a week?)
14. What is your opinion about the use of the resource room? (Do you find it productive)
15. From your point of view, what challenges do you think students with SpLD face in mainstream schools?

16. How does your office ensure that parents of students with SpLD are involved in the education of their children?
17. Do you consider their involvement adequate? (Probe for more information)
18. How does your office collaborate with schools to ensure that student with SpLD receive adequate support? (What other agencies do you collaborate with?)
19. What is your opinion about including students with SpLD in the regular school/classrooms?
20. What challenges do you face working as a SEN supervisor?
21. What do you think is the best educational provision for students with SpLD?
22. What proposals would you make for improving the education of children with SpLD?
23. Is there any other information that I may have left out which you possibly feel may be useful to my study?

Appendix 10: Interview Guide for Schools

1. What is your role in the school?
2. How long have you been in this profession?
3. Please give me background information of the school?
4. What is a normal school day like?
5. What is the population of the school? (Teachers and Students) What is the average population per class?
6. Do you consider the staffing adequate?
7. What does SpLD mean to you?
8. Are there children with SpLD in your school/class? (If yes: how many?)
9. How do you determine that a student could be having SpLD?
10. What do you think are the courses of SpLD?
11. What happens after a student is suspected to have SpLD?
12. Can you please describe the assessment procedure? (Probe about the assessment tools and the team)
13. What is your opinion about the assessment done to students with SpLD? (Do you consider it adequate?)
14. What programmes does the school have for students with SpLD?
15. What is the difference between the resource room and the regular classroom? (How often do students use the resource room in a week?)
16. What is your opinion about the use of the resource room?
17. From your point of view, what challenges do you think students with SpLD face in the school?
18. What challenges do you face having children with SpLD in your school/class?
19. What is your school's policy on SpLD?

20. Does the school have a policy on SpLD from the MoE? (how does the MoE ensure that the policy is implemented?)
21. What support does the school get from the MoE for supporting students with SpLD? (Do you consider the support you get from the MoE adequate?)
22. What kind of support do you get from: (1) the SEN teacher (2) the SEN supervisor? (Do you consider the support adequate?)
23. What is your opinion about including students with SpLD in the regular school/classrooms?
24. What do you think is the best educational provision for students with SpLD?
25. How are parents/guardians involved in the education of children with SpLD in the school? (How effective is their involvement?)
26. What proposals would you make for improving the education of children with SpLD?
27. Is there any other information that I may have left out which you possibly feel may be useful to my study?

Appendix 11: Interview Guide for Students with SpLD

1. Age _____ Grade _____
2. Tell me about your family (brothers, sisters, position in the family?)
3. What are your hobbies?
4. What is your favourite subject?
5. Which subjects do you find difficult? (probe for reason)
6. Have you ever repeated classes? (if yes, how many times and reasons) - Can you tell me how you feel as result of repeating classes?
7. How do you generally feel about school? (Probe for reason)
8. How do your parents support you perform better at school? (Do you consider that support adequate?)
9. What kind of learning materials are there at home (Books, magazines, computer, table, internet)
10. Have you been assessed to determine why you don't perform well at school? (If yes – what were you told the problem was?)
11. Do you consider yourself as having a disability as result of how you perform at school? (Probe for reasons)
12. What kind of support are you given at school to improve in the subjects you don't perform well?
13. Do you consider that support adequate? (Probe for reasons)
14. What is the difference between the resource room and the regular classroom?
15. How do you feel about the use of the resource room? (Probe for reasons)
16. What do other children say about you because of your performance? (Probe further about how they feel about it)

17. What is different about the SEN teacher and the regular teachers? (probe about how they relate with them)
18. Do you feel like you are treated differently because of your performance at school? (1) By teachers (2) at home (3) by other children (if yes, how?)
19. What is your opinion being in the same class/school with students who generally perform better than you? (probe for further information)
20. What do you think would be the best educational provision for students who face the same challenges as yourself?
21. Is there any other information that I may have left out which you possibly feel may be useful to my study?

Appendix 12: Interview Guide for Parents

1. Tell me about your family? (Number of children, their grade in school)
2. What is an ordinary day like for the children at home? (Probe about homework)
3. Tell me about your children's general performance at school?
4. Has any of your children repeated classes or found not to be performing as expected at school? If yes – please tell me more about it?
5. Has the school ever contacted you about your child's performance? (if yes – tell me more about it)
6. What efforts have you made to help the child?
7. What do you see as the courses of your child's learning difficulties
8. Do you consider your child as having a disability? (If Yes- which one. If No – what do you think is the problem with her?)
9. Is there any assessment that has been done to determine why your child does not perform as expected?
10. Were you involved or any family member involved in the assessment of your child? (If yes – tell me more about the assessment procedure)
11. Do you consider the assessment done to your child adequate? (Probe for reasons)
12. How is your child supported at school so that she can improve?
13. Do you consider the support given to your child at school adequate? (Probe for reasons)
14. Are you involved by the school in helping the child? (If yes – how?)
15. Your child is occasionally taken to the resource room; tell me what you think about it?

16. Do you see any improvement to your child's performance at school since she joined the resource room?
17. What is your opinion about including students with SpLD in the regular schools?
18. From your point of view, what other challenges do you think your child faces at school?
19. What do you think is the best educational provision for students with SpLD?
20. How does the MoE support you in the education of your child? (Do you consider the support adequate?)
21. What suggestions would you make for improving the education of children experiencing the same difficulties as yours?
22. Is there any other information that I may have left out which you possibly feel may be useful to my study?

Appendix 13: Data from participants in School 1

1	Q	What is your role in the school?
2	HT S1	I am the head of the school my duties are ensure smooth running of the school. I ensure that the curriculum is implemented as required by the MoE. I act as the link between the teachers, parents and the MoE. I ensure that student's needs are met as required by the MoE.
3	SEN Tr S1	My role is to assess the children with SpLD after their classroom teachers identify them. I am responsible for preparing their files and designing their IEPs, and teaching them. I am also responsible for creating awareness to the parents about how to support their children at home.
4	StA S1	I am the student advisor in this school. My role is to look after the wellbeing of all students including students with disability in the school by working closely with the SEN teacher, the teachers and the parents. I make follow-ups regarding students medical, financial issues and other problems.
5	Tr1 S1	I am a classroom teacher, I teach the third grade Arabic literacy and Islamic studies.
6	Tr2 S1	I am a mathematics teacher, I teach the fourth and the fifth grades. I also used to teach lower grades different subjects such as literacy.
7	Q	How long have you been in this profession?
8	HT S1	33 years just as a head teacher I worked as classroom teacher for six years then as a head teacher assistant for three years.
9	SEN Tr S1	My experience in teaching children with SpLD is seven years.
10	StA S1	I have been working as a student advisor for five years.
11	Tr1 S1	I have been teaching in primary schools for 26 years.
12	Tr2 S1	My experience in teaching in primary school is about 25 years.
13	Q	Please give me background information of the school?
14	HT S1	The school if a public school funded by the MOE and was opened in 1999. We are the only school in this area that offers SpLD programme and it started seven years ago (in 2008). The SpLD programmes attract parents to the school, they usually ask me to accept their children in my school. It breaks my heart to refuse or just put them in the waiting list but I can take more students while I don't have available places. This is a highly populated area so I think there should be more SpLD programmes in all primary schools in this area.
15	Q	What is a normal school day like?
16	HT S1	We have five days in a week from Sunday to Thursday. We start at 7: am in the morning. At 7:15 we have the assembly. Lessons start at 7:30. Each lesson is 45 Minutes. At 9:00 the lower grades (first, second and third) have a 30 minutes break

		till 9:30. Upper grades (fourth, fifth and sixth) have their break at 10:00 until 10:30. We normally have six to seven lessons in a day. The school day ends at 12:30 for lower grades and 1:00 pm for upper grades.
17	SEN Tr S1	The school day starts at 7 am finishes at 1 pm. I usually take students with SpLD to the resource room 11 am unless if students with SpLD are available earlier than that for example if one of the teachers is absent in the early morning this is done to avoid withdrawing students from important lessons like literacy, maths and sciences which are normally the first lesson of the day.
18	Q	What is the population of the school? (Teachers and Students) What is the average population per class?
19	HT S1	The school has 21 classes. Grades 1-3 have four classes; Grades 4-6 have three classes each. Currently there are 700 students enrolled in the school. There are 40 teachers, including the SEN teacher. Grades 1-3, which are lower classes, have one teacher assigned per class. The rest of the teachers are assigned various subjects depending on their speciality or interest in grades 4-6. The SEN teacher supports students with disabilities. The school also has a student advisor who is like a social worker, that one is not involved in teaching.
20	SEN Tr S1	I have 18 students with SpLD this year I can't take more than nine students with SpLD per term. The students with SpLD since I started in this school are around 120 some of them graduated from primary and went to intermediate schools. Some stay with me for more than two or three years. I also have a waiting list, which contain around 170 names. These students are waiting for places to be assessed. I am the only SEN teacher in this school.
21	StA S1	In this school we have 700 students divided into six grades. We have 21 classes, 40 classroom teachers, one SEN teacher, one student advisor, the head teacher has one assistant and a secretary and other school staff like administrators, correspondent, three cleaners, and one guard.
22	Tr1 S1	In my class I have 38 students.
23	Tr2 S1	I have three classes in the fourth grade and two classes in the fifth grade. Each class contain 35 to 39 students.
24	Q	Do you consider the staffing adequate?
25	HT S1	Of course this is one of the problems I have in my school. The teachers in this school are not enough. We need more teachers who are qualified at a degree level. Most of the teachers in this school only have certificates and need to upgrade. I keep requesting the MoE to post more teachers but nothing is done. I am just told they don't have the capacity to employ more teachers for lack of money which I doubt.

		The teachers are not adequately trained, for example I only have a few teachers who graduated from universities and specialised in particular subjects like the SEN teacher she has a bachelor's degree in SEN, the student advisor has a bachelor's degree in psychology and another three classroom teachers have bachelor's degree in history maths and science. We need more like them.
26	SEN Tr S1	I think no, I am the only SEN teacher in this school. If there was another one with another resource room we would have taken more students with SpLD to the programme.
27	StA S1	The number of the teachers is not enough. Also we need another SEN teacher. One is not enough at all.
28	Tr1 S1	No, I think we need more classroom teachers. I want to teach only one or at least two classes. I am struggling with four classes and in each class there are 36 to 38 students, these are very many.
29	Tr2 S1	The teachers are not enough, for example my timetable is very crowded such that I have no free lessons, I also have very many students in each class such that the classes are crowded and I still have other duties in the school.
30	Q	What does SpLD mean to you?
31	HT S1	SpLD is inability to learn, it may happen to any person's life. In the classroom the students have inability to learn. They don't pay attention to the teacher when she teaches them in the classroom. They don't focus or concentrate on the lessons. They don't do well in tests and exams. The teachers spend long time with them, so they take a lot of the teachers' time and require more effort to teach as well
32	SEN Tr S1	SpLD is difficulties which include developmental and academic skills.
33	StA S1	It means the students have difficulties in some subjects and they need help.
34	Tr1 S1	It isn't a handicap or a disease. I think the learning of the student is very slow.
35	Tr2 S1	I think it is a disease, students with SpLD are very poor and different from other students, and their minds are damaged. I think it's a disease, which is related to the brain.
36	Q	Are there children with SpLD in your school/class? (If yes: how many?)
37	HT S1	Yes we have students who have disabilities in reading or mathematics; they attend support sessions with the SEN teacher. I don't know how many students with disability are in my school but the SEN teacher enrolls 18 students with difficulties in the SpLD program each year. That's her maximum limit as she wouldn't be able to teach more than 18 alone.
38	SEN Tr	The number of the students who are accepted in this program

	S1	is around 12-18 students every year although there are more students who could be having SpLD in the school.
39	StA S1	I think around 18 students with SpLD but it is better to check with the SEN teacher. This is only the number of the students who are accepted in the programme a year but if I give the number of the waiting lists, I have around 150 students who are waiting to be assessed. Also we have 1 student with autism. She was sent to the diagnostic centre in the MoE then they sent her back to the school with a report. The student is lost between the other students. She doesn't understand anything and she has no support at all, even the SEN teacher can't help her because she has no IEP and the programme supports only students with SpLD.
40	Tr1 S1	Yes I have three students with SpLD in my class.
41	Tr2 S1	Yes I have a lot, actually in each class there is two or three.
42	Q	How do you determine that a student could be having SpLD?
43	HT S1	They don't pay attention to the teacher when she teaches them. They don't focus or concentrate on the lessons. They don't do well in tests and exams. The teacher spends long time with them, so they take much time and effort
44	SEN Tr S1	Low academic performance from the first year they register at school is clear sign of SpLD. I first noticed that Cd1 and Cd2 generally had difficulties in writing because they lack the basic skills of writing such as the ability to control the small muscles in the hands, the ability to hold the pencil properly, realize the space between the letters, realize spatial relationships up and down, realize the directions like right to left and vice versa, direction of the different shapes and the sizes and the ability to copy them and also the ability to draw the geometric shapes. Therefore, I actually focus on basic writing skills, and also spelling skills.
45	StA S1	Certainly they are not identified in a day or two. At least they need a month until the classroom teacher notices some difficulties on the student especially those whose academic level is low. I then take a further step and contact the SEN teacher in order to take these students into consideration
46	Tr1 S1	I noted that Cd2 does not participate in the class. For example, in the dictation, when I give her spelling tests, she writes nothing and she has difficulty in reading. She sometimes spells, reads the characters and can't read a complete word. She doesn't concentrate and doesn't pay attention. This means that I always put her in the front so that she is close to me. SpLD students are very poor in the spelling.
47	Tr2 S1	From their exams sheets, and during the exams as well. When I ask Cd1 to write, she does not write something readable; she

		scratches some words, which I could not read.
48	Q	What do you think are the causes of SpLD
49	HT S1	I think those students have these disabilities since they were born. Maybe during pregnancy their mothers ate or drunk something wrong. Or maybe mothers had some medicine during pregnancy. Sometime neglect from family or from the students themselves.
50	SEN Tr S1	I believe nutrition plays an important role. I mean here at schools we don't offer healthy meals that contain all the required vitamins which the children need to keep them active during the day. The children rely on junk food and even more I think some children don't eat their breakfast at home before they come to school.
51	StA S1	I actually don't know exactly the causes of SpLD but I think it is something related to their understanding, their brains. They have difficulties to understand the lessons. Maybe genetic plays a role as well I mean if someone in the family has a disability it may lead to have children with difficulties too.
52	Tr1 S1	<p>I believe that maybe the students suffer from low vision or their brains can't understand some information, some of them maybe have difficulties in hearing so I think they have some problems that prevent them from understating or have difficulties in learning. Also may be family problems for example, if the mother was divorced and was not in the home, the student would not find the good follow up at home. The family problems may be reason for the students' difficulties.</p> <p>Also those students are very naughty, you see them very quiet in the classroom but when you see them in the schoolyard, they scream their heads off, in my personal opinion those students are naughty, they don't care about learning and depend on the SEN teacher so that's why they don't study at home.</p>
53	Tr2 S1	I think it is a sickness or a disease located within their brain. Some SpLD students are not very healthy and they eat junk food like chocolate and chips all the time. This unhealthy food might affect their brains so that's why they have these disabilities. Also they use smart devices and iPad all the time. These devices damaged their brains; their brains are frozen so that why they can't learn properly. You see all the students in my class have smart devices such as iPods, iPads, and galaxy. The children spend long hours using these devices and the parents don't care about that. Mothers offered their children what they want but when it comes to studying or something related to their lessons, the parents send messages to us that we ask their children to buy too many things.

54	Q	What happens after a student is suspected to have SpLD?
55	HT S1	The class teacher reports this to me or to the students-advisor. Then those students are transferred to the SEN teacher. The SEN teacher gives them some tests, if the students don't pass these tests she sends letters to their parents and let them know about their child's problems and asks their permission to register their children in the programme for students with SpLD. If the parents agree, she completes the rest of the procedure. But some parents really don't understand and they think their children will be labelled and that will affect their self-esteem.
56	SEN Tr S1	Children suspected to have SpLD are referred to me through the deputy head teacher. After that I conduct the assessment in order to identify those who require extra support if they are confirmed to have SpLD. Once a student is determined to have SpLD I also conduct family counseling so that the parents can be involved in supporting the child.
57	StA S1	When the classroom teacher notices these difficulties she passes the students names to me or refer them to the SEN teacher. The SEN teacher then conducts the assessment and decides if the student has SpLD and follows the required process.
58	Tr1 S1	Well after identifying the students with SpLD, they should be referred to the SEN teacher. Students are normally registered to SpLD programme from the second and third grades.
59	Tr2 S1	They attend some lessons with the SEN teacher
60	Q	Can you please describe the assessment procedure? (Probe about the assessment tools and the team)
61	HT S1	The SEN teacher assesses the students with SpLD. This is her job and it involves classroom observation, interviewing the students, working alongside the classroom teacher and the student's advisor in order to collect information about the students then contacting parents in order to take their permission to assess their children. About the assessment itself I have no idea about the tests used with those students, the SEN teacher can tell you more about that because they are the people who are involved in this process. As the head of the school I just sign documents related to the programme.
62	SEN Tr S1	Students are normally referred to me through the student advisor. I do some pre-tests in order to filter them, the pre-test involves writing a paragraph and some maths tasks involving the four mathematical principles; addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Their performance in the pre-test determines which students require to be enrolled in the SpLD programme more than others, the rest of the students who may also be performing poorly are kept in the waiting list by the student advisor. Such students normally get other support

		<p>like treatment plans, family counselling and follow-up.</p> <p>The assessment also involves collecting information about the student from the school files and from the regular teachers for example regarding attention, concentration and activeness. I then interview the students to find out how they feel about learning.</p> <p>Once I am convinced the student could be having SpLD, I then write to the parents requesting their approval to conduct full assessment according to the MoE guidelines.</p> <p>We have different assessment designs targeting specific curriculum skills (literacy and maths) we have assessment in reading, writing, spelling and maths for each grade from first grade to the sixth grade. If the student with SpLD was in the fourth grade, I should first start the assessment with her from the third grade if she could not pass the assessment then I give her the assessment for the second grade. We are allowed to go down up to two or three grades. After that I write a report with recommendations and the IEP as per the MoE guidelines. The report and the IEP then go to the head teacher and then to parents. If they accept it the student is then enrolled in the programme</p>
63	StA S1	I only provide information about the child, the rest of the assessment is done by the SEN teacher, I can't provide much details about it
64	Tr1 S1	I have no idea about the assessment I just provide information about the child and then sign the IEP once it's prepared by the SEN teacher.
65	Tr2 S1	I am not involved in the assessment myself all what I do is to refer any student who may have low academic performance to the SEN teacher.
66	Q	What is your opinion about the assessment done to students with SpLD? (Do you consider it adequate?)
67	HT S1	I think it is suitable for them.
68	SEN Tr S1	The assessment is not good actually it is designed to test the students in the lower skills in Arabic literacy or maths. These skills were drawn from the MoE curriculums. This is not right and this is not how SpLD are assessed in the advanced countries like the UK or USA. They should be given suitable standardised assessment, which include intelligence test, developmental and academic skills. Here we just focus on the academic skills. The policies don't care about the developmental skills but as SEN teacher I try to include these skills in my lessons or some games or some teaching methods.
69	StA S1	It is better to ask the SEN teacher
70	Tr1 S1	I don't know
71	Tr2 S1	I have no idea

72	Q	What programmes does the school have for students with SpLD?
73	HT S1	We have the support of the SEN teacher and resource room.
74	SEN Tr S1	The support of the resource room and the support given by myself.
75	StA S1	We have support given by the ministry; we have a resource room and SEN teacher.
76	Tr1 S1	The students are taught individually in the resource room by the SEN teacher.
77	Tr2 S1	Resource room and the support from the SEN teacher.
78	Q	What is the difference between the resource room and the regular classroom? (How often do students use the resource room?)
79	HT S1	There is a huge difference. First of all, the resource room has a lot of resources to enhance the students learning. For example students use the computer and they access Internet as well. Secondly, the resource room has multisensory teaching aids which are not available in the regular classrooms. Why? Because the number of the students in regular classroom is huge, 35 to 37 students in one class. So there is no enough space to include a computer for example. Again in the resource room students are supported individually because they are alone while we have to teach about 35 students in the regular classrooms. The workload for classroom teachers is also huge with more than twenty lessons in a week, which are very exhausting
80	SEN Tr S1	<p>The resource room has hearing, sensory and visual aids, it has also a computer; it includes a lot of motivations for the students, it has closets and drawers to keep the students personal files. The regular classrooms do not have a lot of learning resources because students are very many per class. The students spend two or three lessons a week in the resource room which is not enough.</p> <p>Some classroom teacher do not understand their situations and that makes their difficulties even worse, like forcing them to read a text: the classroom teacher need to assess the SpLD student and she want to give her a mark because she is required to do so. Some of them try with the SpLD students many times but they end up giving them zero. The students hate reading because they did not find the right way that encourages them to read or love reading.</p> <p>Using multisensory approaches, makes the students to use all their senses in order to store and remember the information, grab their attention by finding out what the students will study next in the resource room, hanging posters or giving hints about a particular topic. I encourage</p>

		the students to guess answers in order to boost their memory. Telling students interesting stories is also great ways to help the students to remember what was learnt because they enjoy listening to them.
81	StA S1	The resource room is equipped with tools and means, a lot of tangible educational technology, but it still needs more teaching aids and more development. In the classroom the students receive information only. The students go to the resource room according to their timetables. Each student takes two lessons a week.
82	Tr1 S1	The room is equipped with various educational means that attract the students' attention. In addition, the teaching method in such room differs from the classroom. The number of the students in the resource room is very small compared to the classroom. Only two or three students in one lesson but in the classroom I teacher 38 students in one lesson. The students go twice a week, I allow them to go in during free lessons or when we have two literacy classes following each other I allow them to go in the second lesson. The SEN teacher and I design their timetable, so we try not to affect their progress on other classes.
83	Tr2 S1	The room is good and contain some educational means and tools; they also have a separate budget. The teaching methods used are very different from the teaching methods used in the regular classroom. The students with SpLD are taught one to one or in a small group but in the classroom they are taught with other students, 35 or 38 students. I can't give students with SpLD sufficient time in the regular class because I have to deal with other students.
84	Q	What is your opinion about the use of the resource room?
85	HT S1	This room is very important in the school and it should exist in all schools. This room contains things that draw the student's attention. It's like the students have a private lesson with the SEN teacher because they are taught individually not in a group. The SEN teacher devotes all her effort and attention to that student.
86	SEN Tr S1	The resource room is very important and I wish all the classrooms were like the resource rooms. Students feel more confident in the resource room because there is privacy and the SEN teacher helps them without ridiculing them like in the regular classroom. Changing learning styles and teaching methods help the students to understand and master their needs. The students like it more than the regular classrooms because they usually get a lot of rewards, moral support, gifts and presents. My job is to motivate them and support them. I always encourage them to read and I use the computer to help them.

		<p>Some students really like reading from the computer, but some like to highlight the texts with different colours. Some of them ask me to rewrite some texts in their notebooks and highlight the difficult words or write them in cards with big font. It is very important to know their preferred method of reading so I try to help them. Some classroom teacher did not understand their situations and that makes their difficulties even worse, like forcing them to read a text: the classroom teacher need to assess the students with SpLD appropriately and reward every small effort they make. Some teachers don't consider the efforts students with SpLD make so instead of rewarding that they just give them zero marks. The students hate reading because they were not encouraged to read so that they can love reading.</p> <p>The students in this school used to call the resource room the room for lazy students. I decide to invite them during their free time. I took the permission from the head teacher so I designed a tameable for each class in the school to visit the resource room and spend some time with me. After seeing the way I teach students with SpLD and the games and other approaches, they started to like the recourse room more. Some of them even ask me to join the resource room.</p>
87	StA S1	<p>It helps in improving the students' academic performance. The teaching methods used in the resource room are different from the regular classroom. The SEN teacher in resource room deals with individual students. So the students concentrate more than when they are in a large classroom and possibly the classroom teacher does not notice their presence in the classroom.</p>
88	Tr1 S1	<p>Honestly, sometimes I feel this is useless. I did not see any improvement on the students' academic performance. For example the students with SpLD are taught different literacy skills from the literacy skills that are taught in the regular classroom. They are normally taught skills that are lower than the grades we are teaching in the regular classrooms.</p>
89	Tr2 S1	<p>I do not notice any improvement on the students' learning. For example with the SEN teacher they are taught lower literacy skills for the first or second grades, in the classroom they are taught their actual literacy skills for the third or fourth grades. When I assess them in the classroom I assess them just like other students, so they are required to master and pass the assessment and I should consider them just like other for example if the students are required to be assessed out of %100 then the students with SpLD are required to be assessed in the same way. Then why they study in the resource room lower skills while they are not required to pass them?</p>

90	Q	From your point of view, what challenges do you think students with SpLD face in the school?
91	HT S1	In the regular classroom teachers have huge number of students so students with SpLD hardly get enough support from the teachers because they have no time to focus on such students and cover the syllabus at the same time. The students are considered to be careless by the teachers. Teachers and other students also have a tendency of making negative comments about them due to their poor performance in class. Some students just avoid school to avoid getting embarrassed by teachers due to their poor performance, for example we had a case of one student who started missing school for no reason, when we investigated the student said she hated literacy and the teachers because they would embarrass her in the presence of her classmates for failing to read in class.
92	SEN Tr S1	The students may be affected psychologically due to repeated failure. They may get depression and have negative self-image. Other students have a tendency of making fun of students with SpLD, to avoid this they may result into cheating in assignments by for example copy from others. Well in reading, the difficulties Cd1 and Cd2 face are in learning the alphabets and difficulties in joining the letters with their sounds, difficulties in breaking the words into single sounds and blending the sounds to make words. I mean they generally have difficulties in phonics. I think their fears of speaking or reading properly affect their self- esteem and they feel embarrassed when their classroom teachers ask them to read in front of their classmates. So, most SpLD students have difficulties in finding the differences between the similar words and letters. Students with SpLD are sometimes messy and confused, they need to learn some techniques about how they can organise their stuff or how they can make their work tidy like using different colours in their notebooks.
93	StA S1	Well classroom teachers can't bear students with SpLD in their classrooms. Since we can only have 12-18 students in SpLD programmes, there are many of them left behind without any support. In addition those students are called 'idiots' and most classroom teachers think that there is no way in helping them or improving their academic level.
94	Tr1 S1	Cd2 gets embarrassed in class when they fail to perform like their peers. They suffer psychologically. Those students are called lazy, poor, negligent students because of their poor performance in learning.
95	Tr2 S1	I think the changes in the education system and the assessment methods do not favour students with SpLD, they keep repeating classes and they are thought to be lazy. Cd1

		and also other student with SpLD face a lot of difficulties in reading, writing and spelling. At home they just spend hours and hours on their smart devices without anyone to help them. For example CD1 has a problem with her memory. She suffers from forgetting, although she is a hard working student as she tries very hard to understand but her memory does not help her. She suffers from forgetting but what makes me wonder is that she only forgets information related to her lessons or learning in general but she doesn't forget her things like her books, notebooks, or her bag. She doesn't forget her name or her parents' names or her brothers' names. That means she has something wrong with her memory but related to studying.
96	Q	What challenges do you face having children with SpLD in your school/class?
97	HT S1	Involving parents of children with SpLD. Some parents really don't understand and they think their children will be labelled and that will affect their self-esteem.
98	SEN Tr S1	I think the misunderstanding between slow learner and SpLD in our education. I don't have standardized assessments that help me to differentiate between them. Some students are referred to the SpLD programme but after a while I realise that they are just slow learners or have poor educational background and should not be in the programme. Lack of awareness by the classroom teachers is another problem such that they don't help me and they don't help the students with SpLD so that's why sometimes we don't see much improvement. I remember when I started working in this school some teachers talked to me about some students who called 'Lazy' they asked me to take them to my programme because those student were not doing anything in the classroom.
99	StA S1	I think dealing with parents of children with SpLD is one of the difficulties I face. Sometimes I have to call them or invite them or prepare meeting in order to talk about their children situations. Some parents are very difficulties to deal with and they refuse to listen or even understand anything.
100	Tr1 S1	I have to put extra effort on students with SpLD unlike with other children in the class. They miss classes quite often which I don't like, for example if Cd2 in my class knows that the following day there would be dictation, recitation or an exam she does not come to school. The other problem is that the students don't understand questions or follow my instructions. When I ask them questions they don't reply or they say we don't understand the question I think they don't concentrate when I ask them questions that's why they don't

		understand me.
101	Tr2 S1	<p>Those students take almost most of my time I can't focus on them and the rest of the class at the same time. The other problem that I face with the students with SpLD is that they seem not to understand what I teach even simple instructions and questions, they don't follow my instructions, I think they don't concentrate when I ask them questions and possibly that is why they don't understand me.</p> <p>Parents don't follow their children at home, they don't revise with them what they have been taught in school, also the students with SpLD rely on the SEN teachers a lot, they don't care about the lessons in the classroom.</p> <p>For example I have been teaching Cd1 since the first grade and I know her difficulties. She performs poorly, and her case is different from other students. When I teach her in the classroom she never pay attention. She doesn't focus in the lesson and her writing is incomprehensible 'doesn't make sense'. But when I take her to my office and teach her alone one-to-one, she seems to understand and also she does her exercises but when I revise the lesson with her in the next day she forgets everything. She can't remember what she studied in the day before.</p>
102	Q	What is your school's policy on SpLD?
103	HT S1	We don't have a school policy actually. We only apply the policies from the ministry of education. In fact we are not allowed to set up our own policies
104	SEN Tr S1	There is no school policy for those students
105	StA S1	We don't have any policy on SpLD in this school.
106	Tr1 S1	We don't have any school policy
107	Tr2 S1	We don't have any school policy
108	Q	Does the school have a policy on SpLD from the MoE? (How does the MoE ensure that the policy is implemented?)
109	HT S1	We have SpLD guidebook from the MoE. The MoE ensures that there is a SEN teacher in every school with SpLD programmes who collaborates with the SEN supervisor in the MoE.
110	SEN Tr S1	There are policies from the ministry, which state the roles of the Head Teacher, the role of the student advisor, the role of SEN teacher, the role of the class teacher and the role of the parents. Guidelines also specify how IEPs should be designed. There is SEN supervisor from the MoE who ensures that the guidelines are followed.
111	StA S1	I have never seen any policy guidelines for the SpLD

		programme from the MoE.
112	Tr1 S1	I am not sure if I received some guidelines from the SEN teacher
113	Tr2 S1	I don't know, I have never received any policies
114	Q	What support does the school get from the MoE for supporting students with SpLD? (Do you consider the support you get from the MoE adequate?)
115	HT S1	Let me tell you the provision is very weak. Yes they provide the school with a resource room but they are not adequately equipped, they leave the rest to head teachers. I don't have enough money to create an excellent learning environment in the resource room. The policy states that the MoE should financially support the programme and the resource room but unfortunately we are struggling to have this support. And as I told you before the ministry doesn't provide the teachers with training. It's all personal effort from the teachers and the school, the SEN teacher organises some workshops and then invites the classroom teachers in order to create awareness.
116	SEN Tr S1	What we get from the Ministry is not enough to be honest; sometimes it takes time to get the money in order to buy some materials for the resource room such paper, ink, cards, and so on. I am sometimes forced to spend my own money to equip the resource room. We require more funding to equip the resource room and teacher training. For example I have not attended any workshop for three years.
117	StA S1	The MoE sets up the resource room and then ensures that there is SEN teacher in the school. I don't think the support given by the MoE is enough, more money is required for the resource room.
118	Tr1 S1	It is better to ask the SEN teacher, but generally I don't see any provision apart from the resource room.
119	Tr2 S1	I don't get support from the Educational supervisors from the MoE whenever they visit the want to know why the students with SpLD are not performing like the others they keep asking: Why those students couldn't pass? Why they did not obtain full mark? Why they did not master the skills? They don't care about the individual differences among the students; they just want to see all the students pass with full mark'.
120	Q	What kind of support do you get from: (1) the SEN teacher (2) the SEN supervisor? (Do you consider the support adequate?)
121	HT S1	The SEN teachers informs me about the requirements for the resource rooms, she also provides training to trainee teachers who come from Universities and provides me with new updates in this field She is very supportive in identifying students with SpLD in the school and creating

		awareness to the regular teachers and parents.
122	SEN Tr S1	The SEN supervisors rarely visit the school because they are few and they have very many schools to cover. We only send the paperwork to them but they hardly visit to see what we are doing. They want the policies implemented but they do not visit to see how we do it. SEN supervisors don't consider that students with SpLD are different, they want us to work with them exactly as has been agreed in the IEPs, goal-by-goal and step-by-step. There should be kind of collaboration between us because we know the students better so they should also listen to us, unfortunately this doesn't happen, what we have is just orders from them.
123	StA S1	The support we get from the SEN supervisor is good; as a result the students' academic performance is improved.
124	Tr1 S1	I don't get any support from the SEN teacher; yes she sends papers to me, which contain instructions on how to teach those students and how to assess them in the classroom. The SEN teacher only picks the students from the classroom to the resource room; there is nothing much we do together.
125	Tr2 S1	I don't get any support from the SEN teacher. She only comes to my classes to pick the students with SpLD
126	Q	What is your opinion about including students with SpLD in the regular school/classrooms?
127	HT S1	I think they should be included in regular school. Those children are not stupid; they don't have any other or visible disabilities. All what they need is support. Teachers and other students think that students with SpLD are 'Lazy' 'Neglected' or 'naughty'. The teachers don't know how to deal with those students in the classrooms. So the SEN teacher always tries to prepare workshops for classroom teachers in the school and explains to them what these difficulties are and how they can deal with those students in the classroom.
128	SEN Tr S1	I don't think they should be isolated but we should have policies to protect them and the regular teachers be trained on the essential skills on how to teach them and how to deal with them, they should know how to deal with those students and not to treat them like other students.
129	StA S1	I don't see it as a problem; unfortunately teachers don't accept them in their classes because they see them as retarded and often see them as a bother and as extra burden. They prefer that they are taught in their own classes or school
130	Tr1 S1	Having children with SpLD in the regular classes is not right. Although the SEN teachers take them out to the resource room, what they learn there is different from what we teach since I teach different skills to the other students. The students with SpLD get embarrassed because they can't read like the others. Therefore, it is wrong that these students are taught

		with students who are better than them. When they all are in one class that means I should spend more hours and more effort with them which means I can't proceed with the other students in the classroom.
131	Tr2 S1	I think the best thing would be to creating a special classroom, which contains all the students who have difficulties in reading, writing, and spelling. I would be happy to teach them though but the class should not contain more than ten students.
132	Q	What do you think is the best educational provision for students with SpLD?
133	HT S1	I think we need speech and language centre because some students have language difficulties. We need social and psychological centres as well because some students have psychological problems affecting their learning. If all these centres were available to the school, the students would be better and we would sort most of their problems. Or at least if specialists were sent to the school regularly every week or every two weeks to support the students then the SEN teacher just focuses on improving academic skills. We used to have teacher assistants a few years ago only with first grade students but not any more. This is very important especially in first, second and third grade. The teaching assistant would help the classroom teacher and the SEN teacher so that they can handle more students individually.
134	SEN Tr S1	The educational provision which is there is okay but we need more financial support and more teaching aids in the regular classrooms and in the resource room.
135	StA S1	The programme is okay but it can be improved. Also the student's time at the resource room should be increased as well.
136	Tr1 S1	The current programmes need to be improved. There should be teacher assistants in classes with students with SpLD to support them while I concentrate on the rest of the students in the class. It is supposed that there shall be specific curriculum and we shall determine skills for them like those determined for other students. In addition, there shall be a complete classroom for students with SpLD.
137	Tr2 S1	Just as I mentioned to put them all in separate class and a private teacher would teacher them.
138	Q	How are parents/guardians involved in the education of children with SpLD in the school? (How effective is their involvement?)
139	HT S1	We usually involve the parents by explaining to them the importance of having their children in the SpLD programmes. Some parents think their children will be considered as

		disabled for being in the programme which would affect their future especially not getting married due to the 'disability'. We inform the parents that what happens in the school are never shared with outsiders.
140	SEN Tr S1	Parents are considered as very important members in the teamwork. Without their involvement and permission I can't do anything, I can't assess any child or start anything. I send letters to the parents from time to time, their mothers visit me and we discuss some issues relating to their children. Also whenever I feel like I want to see a parent, I send her a request or sometimes I phone them and ask them about particular issues regarding the child
141	StA S1	The involvement of parents is very important. I communicate with parents regarding their children health, economic, social, psychological and behavioural aspects. They are informed about everything and also I invite them for meetings whenever we want to talk to them about their children's difficulties. Some parents are sometimes very difficult to deal with at the beginning but after several meetings they seem to understand and cooperate.
142	Tr1 S1	I normally arrange meetings with the parents to discuss about their children; during that time I explain to them the difficulties their child is facing and then guide them on how to support the child at home. Parents are generally cooperative
143	Tr2 S1	I contact the parent regularly; I send them notes in order to follow their children progress. I also invite them and talk to them about their children academic progress, some parents never come and some visit me once a year.
144	Q	What proposals would you make for improving the education of children with SpLD?
145	HT S1	I would include specialists to work alongside with the teachers who teach students with SpLD for example speech and language therapist, social and psychological specialists. I would increase the financial support. I would like the policy to be improved in which we are involved in developing it. Teachers should be encouraged to learn from each other and to support each other.
146	SEN Tr S1	The programme should be developed and improve so that it can include all children with SpLD. The programmes we have are very limiting, because we only focus on essential academic skills. So far they (MOE) don't accept any suggestions or improvements, they just focus on the guidebook for SEN teachers and update it according to some SEN teachers experiences but they never make any changes in the assessments. A few years ago I came up with a new programm for SpLD, I presented it to my SEN supervisor but she never listened to me and just asked me to do what I have

		to do according to the MoE policy. Since then I was very disappointed and hopeless to make any changes or improvements.
147	StA S1	I think there should be more teaching aids, more SEN teachers and another resource room so that we can include at least 30 students with SpLD instead of the current 18 a year
148	Tr1 S1	Students with SpLD to be taught by SEN teachers in separate classes all day.
149	Tr2 S1	If I had to teach 15 to 20 students in my class I would be able to apply more strategies, I would divide my class into corners and put a library, I would do a lot of things but with this number of students I can't do that. I would like the curriculum to be changed, to be more accommodating, more assessments centres to be set up so that children with SpLD are identified early before joining school for early intervention. Classroom should not contain more than 20 students.
150	Q	Is there any other information that I may have left out which you possibly feel may be useful to my study?
151	HT S1	I don't think so
152	SEN Tr S1	I think I need a teacher assistant to help me to reduce the administrative work, as we are required to do a lot of work not just teaching. I can then be able to focus more on teaching students with SpLD with the help of the teaching assistant.
153	StA S1	SpLD programmes are definitely a wonderful idea at schools. I can only suggest that they be developed to cater for more students.
154	Tr1 S1	No.
155	Tr2 S1	No.

Appendix 14: Data from School 2

156	Q	What is your role in the school?
157	HT S2	I am the head of the school my duties are ensure smooth running of the school. I ensure that the curriculum is implemented as required by the MoE. I act as the link between the teachers, parents and the MoE. I ensure that student's needs are met as required by the MoE
158	SEN Tr S2	I am the SEN teacher in this school, my duties are to identify students with SpLD, assess them and provide them with the support they need.
159	StA S2	I am the student advisor, my work is a bit like a social worker, I look after the students in terms of their health, social and economic state. I also follow them academically and keep all their files updated. I contact their parents and am in touch with them regularly.
160	Tr1 S2	I am a classroom teacher, I teach the third grade Arabic literacy and the holy Quran. Graduated from the Institute of Teachers
161	Tr2 S2	I am a classroom teacher, I teach the third grade Arabic literacy and Islamic studies. Graduated from the university bachelor degree in Arabic language.
162	Q	How long have you been in this profession?
163	HT S2	I have been working as a head teacher for 17 years. But before that I worked as a teacher for three years then as a student advisor for five years.
164	SEN Tr S2 S2	My experience in teaching SpLD is 5 years.
165	StA S2	For about 20 years
166	Tr1 S2	I have been teaching for 15 years now.
167	Tr2 S2	I have been teaching for 17 years, but I used to teach in high school Arabic literacy. I just moved to primary school 5 years ago due to some family issues.
168	Q	Please give me background information about the school?
169	HT S2	This school was opened in 2004 and is a public school funded by the MOE. All the staff is employed by the MOE. SpLD programme was started in 2008 and we have one SEN teacher to manage the programme. Education is free. Curriculum and teaching methods are all according to the MOE policies.
170	Q	What is a normal school day like?
171	HT S2	The school day starts at 7 am and finishes at 1 pm. The assembly starts at 7:15 with the morning program. Then the first classes start at 7:30 am. We have two break periods one for lower grades at 9:00 am for 30 minutes. Then the second one at 10:00 am for the upper grades and also for 30 minutes. The students have seven lessons a day sometimes the lower grades have less five to six lessons a day. Each lesson is 45

		minutes.
172	SEN Tr S2	I normally start working with the students in the resource room after they finish lessons, which are considered essential like maths, and sciences, which are normally the first lessons in the timetables. I can only take the students in the resource room earlier than that in case the teacher is absent. The timetable for the resource room is not fixed; I keep changing it to suite the students and the teachers and according to the availability of the students. Each session in the resource room takes 45 minutes.
173	Q	What is the population of the school? (Teachers and Students) What is the average population per class?
174	HT S2	I have 706 students, 22 classes. The lower grades I have four classes each. The upper classes I have three classes each. I have one resource room I have around 38 teachers apart from the administrators and other school staff. I have one student advisor and one SEN teacher. The average population per class is 35 to 38 students. For SpLD students the SEN teacher has a limitation so the maximum is 18 students and the minimum is 8.
175	SEN Tr S2	I am the only SEN teacher in this school. I have a bachelor degree in SEN. The SpLD students who are registered in the SpLD programme this term are nine students. I am only allowed to take 18. The number of the students since I started is 87 students, you know some students stay in the programme for more than two years some I can't replace their places until they achieve their IEPs. We have a waiting list, which contains more than 100 students, but they are just waiting for their chance.
176	Tr1 S2	In my class I have 37 students
a.	Tr2 S2	I have 36 students in my class
177	Q	Do you consider the staffing adequate?
178	HT S2	No, we are a very big school with high population of students we need more teachers especially for the upper grades; the fourth, fifth and sixth grades. I want more teachers for each class. I have some teachers who can't teach all subject, for example the teacher who teaches Arabic and Islamic studies can't teach science or maths. So each class; especially the upper classes, are taught by three or four teachers according the subjects. Also I need another SEN teacher. One is not enough; the maximum number of students for SpLD is 18 students a year. We have a long waiting list we just wait until a student finishes her programme or graduate. With the updated and more advanced curriculums it is very important to employ more qualified teachers with at least a bachelor's degree. Most of the teachers in the school are hold a

		two year teaching certificate and graduated from the teacher institutes long time ago.
179	SEN Tr S2	I think No especially SEN teachers. I am the only SEN teacher in this school and I think we need another one. Or at least I need a teacher assistant to reduce the work and take more students in the programme.
180	StA S2	No the number of the classroom teachers is not enough. That is why we find it difficult to have children with SpLD in our classes.
181	Tr1 S2	No, classroom teachers are not enough. Can you imagine we have only one history teacher she teaches the fourth, fifth and sixth grades and each grade has three classes so she has a very busy timetable.
182	Tr2 S2	No it is not adequate, especially with the developed and advanced curriculums, specialization is needed. For example I studied Arabic language at university. I am only qualified to teach Arabic or Islamic studies in the primary schools I can't teach maths or art or science because it is difficult for me. I think the MOE needs to look at this problem and employ more university graduates.
183	Q	What does SpLD mean to you?
184	HT S2	It is a difficulty with letters or numbers; a simple stumble which can be overcome if the students were helped and supported by their mothers, classroom teachers, and SEN teachers.
185	SEN Tr S2	I have studied this concept at university and it means the students have difficulties in reading, writing and spelling or in mathematics. In the ministry policy this term does not exist. So we describe them as learning disability.
186	StA S2	It is a difficulty. It is not a problem. The students are confused and the information did not reach them properly.
187	Tr1 S2	I think they are not difficulties but the lack of support, and lack of care from the first grade.
188	Tr2 S2	It is the lack of ability to engage with the educational process and with the classroom environment.
189	Q	Are there children with SpLD in your school/class? (If yes: how many?)
190	HT S2	There are quite a number of students whom we think having SpLD but only a few have been assessed so it is difficult to give the actual number. There is the minimum number that can be enrolled in the SpLD programme so most of them are just left out.
191	SEN Tr S2	Yes I have nine students for this term.
192	StA S2	Yes I have a list of 130 students who may have SpLD but they are not assessed yet. The number of the students who already enrolled in the SpLD programme is 18 students this year. Actually the SEN teacher can't take more than that.

193	Tr1 S2	Yes I have two student with SpLD in my class.
194	Tr2 S2	Yes I have two in my class.
195	Q	How do you determine that a student could be having SpLD?
196	HT S2	For example, when the student can't remember what has been taught. When they have difficulties passing their exams, and also when they don't engage in any classroom activates.
197	SEN Tr S2	<p>After transferring the students to me I do pre-test and also attend some classes in their classrooms in order to observe them. I take my notes then I interview the students in order to collect some information. When I notice any difficulties in reading, writing spelling or maths then I would take a further step, which is interviewing the students.</p> <p>Cd1 and Cd2 lack the ability to distinguish what they are reading from the rest of the information in the page such that they don't look at the words as separate unites surrounded by a space hence getting distracted. SpLD students don't have the ability to realize that. Also visual distinction, I mean there are a lot of students with SpLD including Cd1 and Cd2 have difficulties in distinguishing between the letters and the words, distinguishing between letters that are similar in shape like 'ن، ن، ... خ ح، ج، ث، ب، ت' so I have to teach those students and train them how to distinguish between those letters using different teaching tools and methods.</p> <p>For example their auditory perception is one of their difficulties in reading, like where the sound comes from, the ability to distinguish between phonemes, basic sounds and between similar and different words. Auditory sequential memory, I mean repeating and producing speech with certain tones. I think this is very important in order to distinguish between similar and different sounds. Blending sounds is also one of their difficulties as SpLD students lack this ability, they are unable to mix the sounds with each other in order to create or read words, for example one of my student one of my students can't read a word all together like the word 'raas' رأس which means 'head' she spells the letters but she can't mix the sounds together in order to read one word</p>
198	StA S2	If the classroom teacher noticed any difficulties during reading sessions (if the student omitted certain letters during reading) or speech (unclear pronunciation) the teacher fills a form and refers her to me.
199	Tr1 S2	Their low levels in reading, writing and spelling. It is very obvious that their results are different from other students. Also their behaviour in the classroom, sometimes they are very naughty. As you see I have a student with SpLD her writing is not clear, she is always busy, she has difficulty in

		<p>spelling when I give the class a paragraph and ask them to copy it from the board or the book, she can't write the whole paragraph. She can't focus and always misses up between her notebooks.</p> <p>In writing and spelling, the most difficulties, I noticed are holding the pen, which is the writing tool, Cd2 holds the pen differently which make their writing even more difficult. So every time I have writing session with the students with SpLD I have to ensure that they hold the pen in the right position. Also they have difficulties in joining the letters together to make words especially when they copy words or sentences from the board. They even make mistakes when they write their names so I always ask them to write their names in any paper or sheet during writing sessions for practice.</p>
200	Tr2 S2	From their reading and writing, also if the students did not achieve good academic performance.
201	Q	What do you think are the causes of SpLD
202	HT S2	The students may suffer from health problems which hindering them from understanding. Sometimes those students are ok but in the classroom they like plying with other things more than studying so they don't pay attention in the classrooms. They don't focus or concentrate on the lessons.
203	SEN Tr S2	<p>I personally think that other disabilities may be the reason for SpLD although in the ministry of education's definition, it states that other disabilities such as visual impairment or hearing impairment or any other kind of disabilities should not be considered as the causes of SpLD. I disagree with that, I personally think that other disabilities may be reasons for SpLD. I remember last year we had a student who had difficulties in reading but we couldn't know why when she was transferred to me I realised that the girl had other problems so I had to transfer her to the diagnostic centre then we realised that the girl had a hole in her eardrum, therefore that affected her learning, we thought that she had learning disabilities but her main problem was that hole in her eardrum. So yeah other disabilities may be reasons for learning disabilities. For the term dyslexia, I studied this at university and I know it is reading difficulties but we have no cases like that even in the ministry's polices you won't find dyslexia, we just use learning disabilities to describe students who have reading or writing disabilities.</p>
204	StA S2	<p>I think the causes are genetic factors. The health aspect is so important most students in this school suffer from malnutrition. When I started work, I noticed that most students bring unhealthy foods as well as soft drinks.</p> <p>I made a case study about the student who suffered from anaemia. I referred the student to the clinic and took medicine.</p>

		After that we made a nutritional programme here at the school from day start till the day end (dates, milk, and other health foods). After about a month and half, her academic performance improved a lot.
205	Tr1 S2	I think it is a disease. In the past we did have some students like those students but we thought those students were lazy because they were not willing to study. Also family issue might be one of the causes of these difficulties, for example I have one SpLD student she lives with her father and her sister, her mother is away because she works in another city so this girl lacks support from her family.
206	Tr2 S2	Possibly some of the reasons are the health condition; the health condition may have a huge impact on the student learning. Also the brain cells could be affected so that's why the students have difficulties in reading and writing. The advanced curriculums may be one of the causes also; theses curriculums are not very rich with information so the students don't have the chance to learn more about literacy. I also think it could be caused by marriages with close relatives which is common in some families. I have noted that such families have likelihood of getting a child with disability though I am not very sure about that.
207	Q	What happens after a student is suspected to have SpLD?
208	HT S2	The classroom teacher refers their names to the student advisor. The student advisor then collects information about them and contacts the SEN teacher in order to take a further step. The SEN teacher makes sure that she attends their classes in order to observe them and make her conclusion about assessing them or sending them to the diagnostic centre in the MoE if she thinks it is not SpLD.
209	SEN Tr S2	The students are sent to me in order to assess them. The student advisor helps me to collect information about them. I do my job and prepare all the forms and the letters after interviewing the students and make sure that the students need to be assessed. I hand the forms and the letters to the head teachers in order to look at them and sign them. The letters then are sent to parents to get their permission. I can't assess any child without getting their parent consent.
210	StA S2	I provide classroom teachers with forms to be filled if any difficulty was observed with regard to behaviour, health, impaired pronunciation, or any difficulty in certain issues, like the child being orphan or lacks care at home. The teacher fills in these observations forms and sends them to me. We gather comprehensive information about students from all aspects even transportation data (who drives her to school and how picks her up) (health aspects if the students suffers from a disease or disability). I designed a special form for the school,

		<p>which includes all information about any student at school. I think this form is a protection for the student, student advisor, and school.</p> <p>After collecting the important information I send them to the SEN teachers for further consideration.</p>
211	Tr1 S2	<p>I wasn't able to know this in the beginning of the term. I have asked the previous teachers about the level of the students and they have informed me about the situation of each student. Through this way, I have identified the students with learning difficulties. Then I have been given some forms from the student advisor or some time the SEN teacher, they are like observation forms that I should fill whenever I notice any problems on some students like academic difficulties, behavioural or psychological issues or health issue then I hand these forms to the student advisor to take another step.</p>
212	Tr2 S2	<p>I pay attention to their reading; writing and spelling. I always keep an eye on the students' performance in these subjects also when I found the students have difficulties in grammar, the structures of the sentences and also the understanding comprehension then I should fill the transferring form in order to take another step and send the student to the SEN teacher for further assessment. Also at the beginning of the school year I conduct my own test. I give the student a test in literacy I prepare it myself and I draw it according to the previous skills level the students passed. It includes reading, writing, and spelling, I pay attention to everything like the handwriting the lines for example some students write above the line or under the line, or they hold the pens differently. When they read I listen to their reading and according to these tests I take a general view about each student in the class, I can identify who has difficulties from who just forgot some information. I use all these as indicators, which help me with a later stage with students with SpLD forms.</p>
213	Q	Can you please describe the assessment procedure? (Probe about the assessment tools and the team)
214	HT S2	<p>The SEN teacher is responsible for the assessment procedure. The assessment contains many stages it starts with class visits and observation, then collecting information about the students who may have SpLD the SEN teacher seeks the help from the students advisor in this stage. Then contacting the parents when the SEN teacher is sure that further assessment is needed.</p>
215	SEN Tr S2	<p>I used to use survey method. But you know this method is useless. Can you imagine that I would scan 706 papers or results alone and then I would identify those who didn't achieve their academic level and then pick them and do</p>

		<p>further assessments. This sounds crazy. I can apply this method with one or two or even three classes but not the whole school. I did this method a few times but not anymore, it is very difficult I rely on the transferring method, which is easier.</p> <p>The classroom teachers refer some students after several observations, if the classroom teachers thought that some students have difficulties in reading, writing or spelling, they refer them to me then I interview them and do some diagnostic tests after marking the test I decide if a student has SpLD or not. Once students are referred to me I interview them and observe them in the classrooms, if I find that the student might have SpLD I then contact her parents before I conduct the diagnostic test. I sent letters to the parents explaining that their daughter need to be diagnosed because she has some difficulties in reading or writing or spelling. I also attach some information about SpLD with the letter and at the end of the letter I ask the parents to sign if they were happy with me proceeding with the tests. As soon as I gain their consent I do the diagnostic test I also collect information about the student from her teachers and from the student advisor. The assessments are different according to the grades for example if the students with SpLD were in the third grade I give them the assessment for the second or first grade. We have assessment for each grade in literacy and maths.</p> <p>When I finish all this I write a report about the result of the diagnostic test and the data collection and also I have to write a recommendation if the student should be enrolled in the SpLD programme, then all the team member should sign and agree including the parents, the head teacher, the student advisor, and the classroom teacher sign the documents. After that the student can then be registered for SpLD programme in the resource room</p>
216	StA S2	The SEN teacher conducts a diagnostic test for the student with SpLD. The SEN teacher assesses them using her assessment methods like writing, reading and spelling tests. She used to do a survey for the whole school but due to the high population of students she stopped. The classroom teacher or myself refer the students who may have SpLD to her then she completes the process with them.
217	Tr1 S2	I have no idea it is better to ask the SEN teacher my job is to fill the forms and transfer the students to the student advisor. The SEN teacher then conducts the assessment.
218	Tr2 S2	Maybe the students are assessed in reading, writing and spelling in order to know about their weaknesses in these subjects.
219	Q	What is your opinion about the assessment done to

		students with SpLD? (Do you consider it adequate?)
220	HT S2	I think yes as long as the students don't have any other disabilities that require us to send them to the diagnostic centre in the MOE. So yeah I think the assessment is good at the moment.
221	SEN Tr S2	No all the tests we use are not standardised test. We use test based on the curriculums skills in literacy and maths. These tests were prepared by the SEN teachers. I think we need something more professional to assess students with SpLD. The ministry should do that for us and train us from time to time on how to assess them using standardised tests for SpLD
222	StA S2	I think the way we follow in this school is vey good and easy to the SEN teacher. So yes it is adequate.
223	Tr1 S2	I think it is good.
224	Tr2 S2	I think it is good for them.
225	Q	What programmes does the school have for students with SpLD?
226	HT S2	We provide them with a SEN teacher and a resource room including computers, library, and other things. The resource room also is equipped with tools and teaching aids also I have a budget from the MOE just for this room. We have some financial difficulties recently as the fund is not enough and it is not sent at the beginning of the school year so we struggle a bit with them to get the money on time.
227	SEN Tr S2	We have the resource room, which is basically for SpLD programmes.
228	StA S2	We have the service of the resource room and the support of the SEN teacher.
229	Tr1 S2	The resource room and the support from the SEN teacher.
230	Tr2 S2	We have the resource room and the SEN teachers.
231	Q	What is the difference between the resource room and the regular classroom? (How often do students use the resource room?)
232	HT S2	The difference is so huge; the student is alone while in the classroom 35 to 38 students. The resource room contains different educational technology different from classroom such as Learn by Play as well as many items attracting not distracting student's attention. While the normal classroom is distinguished with clear scheme, and sometimes lack of educational technology. The students with SpLD have a timetable for the resource room and the SEN teacher and the classroom teacher design that timetable. The students should not be withdrawn from their essential classes like literacy, maths or science. So the classroom teacher should send the students in their exercisers sessions. Each student with SpLD should attend the resource room two to three times a week
233	SEN Tr S2	The difference is very big. The classroom contains a lot of

		<p>students but in the resource room only one student or small group three to five students. Some students with SpLD told me that they can't learn in the classroom because of the other students. In the classroom the students with SpLD are taught all subjects but in the resource room I focus only on their literacy or maths. The focus in the classroom is on 38 students but in the resource room only on 1 student.</p> <p>Also the resource room is full of resources, teaching tools and the teaching methods are totally different from the classroom. I don't ask the student to learn things by heart 'systematic indoctrination' that used in classrooms. I encourage the students to learn by simple games like puzzles. I divided the resource room into five corners in order to grab the student's attention, I also let the students chose their preferred corner in order to learn I want the students feel comfortable in the resource room, I want them to feel like it is their own room and do whatever they want but they have to follow the room rules. I personally think if we want the information be stored in the children memory then we should create and design the appropriate place for them in order to learn and receive information and help them to remember it at any time.</p>
234	StA S2	<p>The difference is clear. The classroom does not have any equipment except the projector, which came on teachers' account (they paid for it from their accounts); even the projector is not available in all classrooms.</p> <p>The difference between the resource room and classroom is like the difference between heavens and earth. We equipped such rooms by themselves and paid the cost from our savings (painting, curtains). The ministry provided us with desks only ten years ago. The class teacher equips everything on her account even cleaning the air-conditioners</p> <p>The students with SpLD use the resource room twice a week they could use it more but because the timetable of the students and also according to the policy, they should spend 50% of their school day in the regular classroom. They can go up to five times a week but all the students here go two times a week.</p>
235	Tr1 S2	<p>Actually I have seen the resource room just once. I don't go there. But the room is full of resources and completely different from the classroom. The number of the students in the classroom is very big compared to the resource room. One to one or sometime small group three to five students but in the classroom I have 37 students so that's why those students loose their attention in the classroom.</p> <p>I have two students with SpLD and they go to the resource room twice a week.</p>
236	Tr2 S2	<p>The resource room is qualified and equipped with a lot of</p>

		resources. The difference is really huge the resource room is much better than the classroom. Computer and projector are provided all the time. Teaching methods are different one to one or small groups and learning through playing. The children like this room because it encourages them to learn, the teaching strategies and the tools used draw their attention, also the rewarding methods are different from the classroom. The students go tow times a week.
237	Q	What is your opinion about the use of the resource room? (Do you find it productive)
238	HT S2	You call it resource room but I call it support room as it supports normal classes. Its name should be changed from resource room to support room as resource room contains different resources such as books, researches, and other items while support room reinforces classes. It is considered a pillar for both student and teacher. Sometimes some teachers hold meetings in the resource room as they desire to ask about certain strategies used in the room or about its services and how they link it to normal classroom.
239	SEN Tr S2	I think this room is very important and each school should have one. The students with SpLD love it and just fell happy when they come to the resource room. They want to spend the whole day in the room but I can't take them more than %50 of their school day. I have noticed big changes on their academic progress and also in their personalities. They became more confident and very active in their classrooms or in any school activities. I prepared a morning programm and asked them to present it with me they were a bit shy at the beginning but after several tries they became very confident to read in front of other students.
240	StA S2	Yes the room is good and has wonderful results. I, as a student advisor, benefitted from it as it eased the burden on me. I am not a physician or specialised in SpLD. I only read books and take simple courses about SpLD and autism. There are no disadvantages for this room. The relation with students improved a lot and became excellent. Students began to have self-confidence as previously some students may give negative comments such as lays. In addition, students' results became better. After this programme I feel that I fully do my role as a student advisor.
241	Tr1 S2	I think yes as the recourse room environment and the teaching methods used in this room encourage the students with SpLD to study and learn. Also the teaching tools draw their attention so they focus on the lessons.
242	Tr2 S2	The idea of the resource room is good. I think it is very important to have a resource room in the school as long as we have students with SpLD. I have seen changes on the students'

		academic levels. Even I noticed some changes on their personalities and their behaviours for better of course. Those students were not very active in my classes but after attending the resource room they became more active. But for the Arabic literacy sometimes they struggle as I said before especially with some Arabic grammar.
243	Q	From your point of view, what challenges do you think students with SpLD face in the school?
244	HT S2	For students with SpLD No, I don't think they suffer from other problems
245	SEN Tr S2	<p>I think the biggest problem that faces students with SpLD is the lack of awareness in the society. The society is a barrier against them. If these students have some strength in particular areas like arts or handcrafts, these strengths could be dead because of the society views about them.</p> <p>Also they have short-term memory and I always try to focus on their weaknesses by using their strengths. For example when I revise with Cd1 and Cd2 some lessons that they took in the past, they hardly remember them. I think they do not get enough support from their parents, if their parents make follow ups at home they would be better and they would remember their lessons</p> <p>When I enter the classroom in order to take a particular student to the resource room, the whole class shout and say 'the lazy student' is going with the SEN teacher. Even the classroom teachers also call them lazy, when I ask them to send SpLD students to the resource room they say 'those students drive us crazy, they don't understand' or sometimes the classroom teachers say to SpLD students in front of the students in their classrooms 'go, go with the SEN teacher your presence in the classroom as your absence, you don't make any progress' SpLD students face psychological difficulties which make them hate the schools, the whole society lack awareness. If a student had a difficulty in reading or writing but had some strengths in other things, these strengths would be died because of the social perception towards them</p>
246	StA S2	The most common problem those students face is language especially dictation and pronouncing words. They may have problems at home (much stress on the student or punishment if her standard deteriorated), separation problems; the father may hit the mother in front of the girl, unjust treatment between the girl and her brothers. In addition, the economic level of the family may affect the student's needs and health status.
247	Tr1 S2	The most difficult problems that they face were in Arabic

		<p>literacy.</p> <p>Some SpLD students have poor attention and they get distracted by anything that happens in the classroom.</p> <p>I think one of the things that affect their attention in the classroom is that the large number of the students in the classroom such that they are not able to focus. I am also not able to keep their attention because I have other students to attend to.</p>
248	Tr2 S2	<p>Reading, writing and spelling are the most faced difficulties by Cd1 and other students with SpLD. Specifically some difficulties in literacy like the difference between some Arabic grammar like 'Al' alqamaria and 'Al' alshamsia, the Arabic vowels and poor spelling skills. Also the adaption with the surrounding environment is one of their difficulties as students with SpLD have difficulties to engage with other students in the classroom or to get involved in some classroom activities such as reading activities.</p> <p>The students have low self-esteem but with the effort of the SEN teacher and the awareness she makes in the school the other students started to help them. They miss school frequently as well due to poor performance.</p>
249	Q	What challenges do you face having children with SpLD in your school/class?
250	HT S2	<p>I think the support from the MOE for SpLD; the contact with the MOE regarding SpLD is very difficult. Also the number of the students with SpLD in my school is very high and most of them don't get support because of the lack of places in the SpLD programm. I wanted to include all of them and never let any student waiting but I cannot help it. I need another SEN teacher and another resource room but the MoE think one is enough.</p>
251	SEN Tr S2	<p>As a SEN teacher I don't have a person who I can ask her for advice whenever I have any problem with some students, especially if there was something wrong with the diagnosis and I struggle with what to do.</p> <p>My supervise visits me for one or two hours a term or sometimes once a year. She just goes through my file and the students' file and tells me what was right and what was wrong then signs them and leaves without much guidance.</p> <p>The other problem is the diagnosis tests, these tests contain a lot of errors, I had to make corrections and return them to the SEN supervisor. She then accepted the edited version and signed it and sent it back to me with permission to use the edited version.</p> <p>After that I tried to design a test myself and send it to my supervisor, I designed that test according to my experience and</p>

		<p>based on curriculum skills for each grade. The ministry considers these test as informal tests, they welcome any improvements in this field so I decided to do that myself, After that my diagnosis test were approved and I am using them at the moment and I feel really comfortable.</p> <p>Lack cooperation from the regular teachers is another problem that I face; they hardly contact me whenever they have a problem with the students. Some of them sometimes refuse to send the student to the resource room thinking that the student will miss their lessons in the classroom.</p> <p>When I prepare some workshops and invite classroom teachers some of them don't attend, they don't care. They just keep blaming the education system, the students or their families. Being the only SEN teacher in the school, the workload is too much for me with a lot of files to deal with.</p> <p>In the school we don't have a library, how can we ask the student to read or encourage them to read while we don't have a library in the school? In my resource room I created a corner and I called it the library corner, I brought some stories (cut outs) and books and designed a timetable for reading sessions in the resource room. Every week I called four to six students with SpLD and other students who do not have SpLD. I let them to choose any story and shared it with each other. It is like pare reading, so the students who don't have SpLD read first and SpLD students listen, after that the students with SpLD read while their colleagues listen to them. When they finish reading I let them to discuss the stories together and correct their mistakes. I found this way very useful and the students were very happy.</p>
252	StA S2	Well the challenges I have that the awareness for parents, also the waiting lists that contain many students but they are waiting. Also those students are very vulnerable, we should have our own policies in order to protect them and protect their rights in education.
253	Tr1 S2	Maybe contacting their parents, parents don't check on their children from time to time but they need to know about their children progress and care only about their marks. Also some parents don't give any support at home so that's why the students' levels stay the same.
254	Tr2 S2	<p>Dealing with them at the beginning was very difficult especially with great number of students in the classroom, their ability to learn was very weak, but after joining the resource room their progress was much better.</p> <p>Also there is a burden on classroom teachers, we have to do a lot of work and also deal with students with SpLD in the classroom. We should pay attention to them and not to ignore them just like other students.</p>

		Sometimes I want to apply some of the strategies such as the cube strategy and aquarium strategy, but because of the number of the students I just cant. The number of the student is a barrier; the classroom environment is not ideal to apply such strategies.
255	Q	What is your school's policy on SpLD?
256	HT S2	We don't have a school policy; we are not allowed to set up our own policy. The MoE should give us the policy and the instructions and everything. You know we are a public school.
257	SEN Tr S2	We do not have policy for our school.
258	StA S2	Unfortunately we don't have our own policy here in the school.
259	Tr1 S2	I never received any school policy for SpLD.
260	Tr2 S2	I don't think we have a school policy for SpLD.
261	Q	Does the school have a policy on SpLD from the MoE? (How does the MoE ensure that the policy is implemented?)
262	HT S2	Yes there are policies from the MoE, which are wonderful. Even with regard to the new organizational structure, 2 nd version, SEN teacher is included as an important and effective member in counselling and guidance as well as assigned with very marvellous tasks. I think after these new updates, the vision became clear for everyone. These policies are distributed to all teachers and every teacher pursues their tasks.
263	SEN Tr S2	Yes the MoE created official documents, guidance and forms for SpLD programmers and they send us the updated forms from time to time.
264	StA S2	With regard to policies and regulations, I receive nothing but you may find them at SEN teacher's office. In the past these policies were sent to me but now they are sent to the SEN teacher directly.
265	Tr1 S2	Sometimes I sign circulars and policy without reading them, so I don't know whether I have received circulars related to the students with SpLD or not.
266	Tr2 S2	I never received any policies but the SEN teacher guides us on how to deal with them and teach them. We have some guidance on how to assess them in reading, writing and spelling. Maybe I singed them but I did not read them I don't know.
267	Q	What support does the school get from the MoE for supporting students with SpLD? (Do you consider the support you get from the MoE adequate?)
268	HT S2	The MoE provided my school with a resource room and SEN teacher. They did this five years ago and provided the room with furniture like the white board, tables, and chairs. Even the furniture was not complete. I heard that there is a budget for

		<p>this programme from the MOE but I did not receive anything yet, so there is no educational provision except equipping the resource room with simple furniture.</p> <p>We spend money from the school budget sometimes for this programme.</p>
269	SEN Tr S2	<p>The only support we get from the MoE is providing the school with the resource room and the furniture like my office, some tables, boards and some other stuff. The furniture is very basic everything you see in this room I brought it myself, even the wall paint and the floor I changed them, I brought my laptop and my printer. If I wait for them to provide me with these things I would wait for long time maybe a year or more. The support is not enough.</p>
270	StA S2	<p>There is a SEN supervisor in the MoE overseeing the SEN teacher in our school and discusses with her the difficulties she faces. With regard to the MoE, I did not see any provision except the supervisor who oversees the SEN teacher, and the resource room. The support is not adequate, the financial support we get from them is not enough and we struggle sometimes with them so we have to pay ourselves in order to make the work easier and faster.</p>
271	Tr1 S2	<p>Honestly I can't lie to you; I don't have sufficient information about SpLD or about the support given to them. All what I know is that there is a programme for them here in the school and this programme helps those students who have low academic achievement.</p>
272	Tr2 S2	<p>I don't see any other support apart from the SEN teacher and the resource room and it is not enough. We need another SEN teacher and another resource room so other student with SpLD can have the chance to join the resource room as early as possible.</p>
273	Q	<p>What kind of support do you get from: (1) the SEN teacher (2) the SEN supervisor? (Do you consider the support adequate?)</p>
274	HT S2	<p>Well I actually contact the whole committee, the classroom teacher starts to record the name of the student with SpLD or any other problems and handover them to the student advisor who, in turn, gathers and analyses information. Then, the student advisor discusses with the SEN teacher about those students. The student advisor contacts students' parents through sending letters containing certain instructions. Students are not accepted without parents' consent and signature on the forms sent to them. I supervise and sign all forms and IEPs. The team members must sign the individual educational plan. The team members are integrated. The SEN teacher has to do most of the job with the students and I try to provide the SEN teacher with everything she needs. The SEN</p>

		<p>job then to make awareness in the school for classroom teachers, all school staff and parents.</p> <p>I consider the SEN teacher as a physician in a clinic. She is an advisor in admission and registration. At the beginning of the school year, the SEN teacher must be attendant to give opinion about certain students (e.g. recognize whether a student suffers from a disability or not). This means that SEN teacher is an assistant. I always try as possible not to assign spare periods to SEN teacher, as I believe that she needs every minute in supporting SpLD students. So I don't burden her with tasks and treat her as an advisor.</p>
275	SEN Tr S2	<p>The SEN supervise visits me once or sometimes twice a term sometimes once a year. I think I need more visits from her so that I can get more guidance and support. The support I get is not enough, I know she is very busy but we also need her help. We need more training from the MoE about SpLD, I need further training in literacy and maths, I have studied SEN at university sometimes I struggle with some maths lessons or some literacy grammar. I need more training so that I can be able to support the students in all subjects</p>
276	StA S2	<p>At the beginning of school year start, the SEN teacher asks if there are any students with SpLD, I provide her with students' names that were observed during the first grade (first grade students do not enter the programme but when they move to second grade I notify their names to SEN teachers). After that she study their files, asks their class teachers, gathers the sufficient information, and tests or refer them to Diagnosis Centre in the MoE when necessary. I also purse the SEN teacher plan and give instructions about changes and amendments though notes.</p>
277	Tr1 S2	<p>The SEN teacher always cooperates with me regarding students with SpLD, she always asks me about their progress and about the skills they achieved in the classroom. Also she always explains to me how can I assess them in the classroom because students with SpLD have different assessment in the classroom. For example in reading or spelling exams students with SpLD are not required to read the whole text or spell the whole paragraph. Sometimes the SEN teacher gives us workshops about SpLD and sometimes she prepares a morning programm and presents it the morning assembly. She also meets us at the beginning of the school year to notify us by any update.</p>
278	Tr2 S2	<p>The SEN teacher talks to us in our office while we have our breakfast she provides us with some useful information on how to assess students with SpLD in literacy for example in reading students with SpLD are not required to read a full text. Also in spelling they don't have to write a full paragraph, they</p>

		<p>just write two lines if the paragraph is five lines.</p> <p>Also she follows up the students with SpLD in the classroom from time to time, she asks me about their progress in the classroom and also she gives me some documents to sign.</p> <p>Also at the beginning of the school year she meet all of the classroom teachers with the head teacher and the students advisor, she informs use by the updates about SpLD, gives us some documents and forms, we sign them then she follows the students up until they finish their SpLD programm. We put timetable for the students with SpLD so I make sure that the students are not withdrawn in particular subjects like literacy or maths.</p>
279	Q	What is your opinion about including students with SpLD in the regular school/classrooms?
280	HT S2	I believe they must be included in regular schools. I highly support including them and provide them with everything they need. It is not fair to separate them as long as they don't have any other disabilities.
281	SEN Tr S2	They should be taught in general classrooms with the additional support they get form the resource room.
282	StA S2	Totally agree they should not be taken out of regular schools.
283	Tr1 S2	I think students with SpLD are vey vulnerable, I really feel sad when I hear that some classroom teachers don't want to teach them in their classes but thank God most of the teachers here in the school have no problem including them because they don't have any disabilities they are fine, all what they need is support and follow up.
284	Tr2 S2	I agree they should learn in regular classes just like other students. It is not fair to separate them just because they have some difficulties in some subjects.
285	Q	What do you think is the best educational provision for students with SpLD?
286	HT S2	<p>SpLD programme is very wonderful and supportive. If these students left without help, their difficulties might turn into disability hindering their life and future. What we do for them shall be rewarded by Allah not by the MoE or anyone else. I think what we are doing at the moment is good but need improvements.</p> <p>Also students with SpLD need more provision form the MoE. I hope the MoE pays them monthly allowance just like other disabilities in order to encourage them more to learn. Also I would love to provide my school with a support teacher. The support teacher would help in preparing educational technology. As the classroom teacher shall focus on specific group at class. The support teacher would accompany the teacher following students at class linking students to the teacher.</p>

287	SEN Tr S2	<p>I think we could do better we have a very good idea, which are the resource room and the support of the SEN teacher. This is really a wonderful idea but has no basic ground. When you start an idea without any basic plans your idea won't work correctly. We should have look at the mistakes that have been done in this programm in order to provide a good and better educational provision and we should start from the tests we use to identify students with SpLD.</p> <p>I need to work with classroom teacher and encourage those students to learn, I always try to take any chance and engage the students with SpLD in any school activity. I try my best to engage them in the school assemblies, or in the Saudi National Day, or in any programme I make. I tell them to join me to prepare a small programme and present it in front of the students. Also I promise them that I won't give them any papers to read from them. I know most of them hate reading from papers, so we try to find better ways to present any work like songs, plays or even competitions. If classroom teachers collaborate with me we can really encourage these students to learn better and also build their confidence.</p>
288	StA S2	<p>We need a doctor here at school, as I can't do the doctor's role. Sometimes, we call parents if we could give a student medicine she needs at school. We lack educational technology, resource room equipment, and courses for teachers, parents, as the majority do not know what is SpLD. Some think that SpLD is neglect by students so we have to educate them through specialists in this field. I can't give them information; I am not a specialist in this field (I only know a little about SpLD). I can't convey the information clearly. When we contact the Ministry about such demands they say that we have SpLD provision and we shouldn't ask for any more.</p>
289	Tr1 S2	<p>I think the SpLD programme is a successful programme and it benefits all the students with SpLD. I think some students already overcome their difficulties with the support of the SEN teacher so I think the programme is so far so good.</p>
290	Tr2 S2	<p>There should be another resource room in our school and also another SEN teacher. One resource room is not enough in such big school like our school, there are a lot of students with SpLD need to get support from the SEN teacher and from the resource room but because of the availability and the limitation that the SEN teachers has she cant take more than nine students a term.</p> <p>We need workshops and training from the MoE.</p> <p>In the classroom as you have seen there are very many students. The classroom is very crowded, the SpLD students can't focus on the lessons, and there are few teaching</p>

		resources.
291	Q	How are parents/guardians involved in the education of children with SpLD in the school? (How effective is their involvement?)
292	HT S2	The parents are involved in everything related to their children. We can't send any students to the diagnostic centre or to be assessed by the SEN teacher. The student advisor contacts parents through sending letters containing certain instructions. Students are not accepted without parents' consent. We also prepare mother meeting once term, so the mothers have the chance to come and ask whatever they want about their children progress or even to make awareness for them. The mothers also are welcomed to visit the school at any time to check on their children academic progress. Also fathers contact me via phone if they want to discuss any issue related to their daughters.
293	SEN Tr S2	I contact parents regularly; I can't enrol any students in the SpLD programm without her parent permission and their signatures. I also call mothers and invite them for meetings, I talk to them about their children academic progress and also about their behaviours, I explain to them what SpLD mean before they accept the letters then it is up to them if they want to register their children or not. I write notes to mothers many times if I need to see them, if they don't reply I send official letters to them. There are some parents don't cooperate with me even when I send to them a lot of information about SpLD they just refuse even to talk to me.
294	StA S2	At first, we used to send parents letters but they refused to include their daughters in the programme. But now, after lectures and education about the programme, they accept to do so. I remember that a mother thanked the head teacher for such programme at school. So yes their involvement is important we can't take any student without her parents permission. We try our best to convince parents by providing them with enough information about SpLD, also we meet them and ask them to attend and meet the SEN teacher they also can attend lesson in the resource room so they have the chance to see how their children are taught.
295	Tr1 S2	I think parents involvement is very important but some parents don't follow their children up at home I remember last year I met one mother of student with SpLD she checked her daughter progress in the classroom I also talked to her about how important to support the children at home, this year I haven't met any mother yet.
296	Tr2 S2	It is very important and it is the first step that SEN teacher take before assessing any child otherwise parents would be angry or make some troubles. It is very important to take parents

		permission before enrolling any student in the SpLD programm. Parents also contact me to check on their children progress. Some mothers visit me regularly like twice a term but for some I never have seen them.
297	Q	What proposals would you make for improving the education of children with SpLD?
298	HT S2	I wouldn't change but I shall join the SpLD team. I would treat the SpLD students as their mother not their teacher. I wish to leave my position and join the support room and teach and comprehend SpLD students and solve their problems. I wish all teachers deal with them more motherly and genially.
299	SEN Tr S2	<p>I would provide the school with another SEN teacher and another resource room. I would change the society views about SpLD by making awareness, there should be a particulate authority from the MoE visits the school once a week and give SEN teachers or the mothers of SpLD the chance to speak up and share their experience with others I think the effect of this would be much more productive and it will change people views about SpLD very fast. I can't do this alone I want some help from the ministry, they should arrange these meetings for us and send specialists form universities</p> <p>Also I would replace all the paper and the students' files and prepared CDs for each student. These CDs should include everything about the student, personal information, identification tests and assessment, reports and IEPs. I would like to make the work much paperless.</p> <p>I want a teacher assistant, as the assistant would help me with the administrative work and with the students' files.</p> <p>I would reduce the number of the students I take six students each term so I would focus more on them also I would increase their time in the resource room.</p>
300	StA S2	<p>We need equipment for resource room, another SEN teacher, and educational lecturers and courses. The Ministry may hold courses about SpLD in private locations and centres (not schools only).</p> <p>If we, in turn, want to hold a lecture, we don't have the area for mothers. The school playground is large but not air-conditioned as well as being a break place for students. We don't have place for mothers meeting. When we met mothers to explain development features, we held the meeting in the school lab (150 mothers) where there was crowdedness and the AC was not sufficient. I told mothers if they felt tired we would stop but they insisted on completing in such conditions and they were happy with the lecture.</p>
301	Tr1 S2	I think I wouldn't make any improvement but I would improve the way of teaching them in the classroom. For example

		<p>changing their positions in the classroom from time to time so they would have the chance to benefit from the excellent students. I hear some classroom teacher claiming that they need a teacher assistant, for me I don't need it and I disagree with it. I can manage the class alone, yes I have 37 students in my class but I personally think the existence of another teacher in the classroom would interrupt the students' attention.</p> <p>I never have been given any workshops or attended any courses about SpLD from the MoE. I would love to take or attend one.</p>
302	Tr2 S2	<p>I would make the class size smaller I mean the number of the students between 15 to 20 students in order to focus on student with SpLD and give them more time. Also I would provide the classrooms with all educational means.</p> <p>I would provide classroom teachers specialised in particular subjects with assistants so they would make the work easier for classroom teachers.</p>
303	Q	Is there any other information that I may have left out which you possibly feel may be useful to my study?
304	HT S2	I would like to see more researchers like you who are interested in this field. SpLD need a lot to be done, and hopefully this research will make a big change in the filed
305	SEN Tr S2	<p>You know reading is one of the most important skills that taught at schools. Therefore reading difficulties may lead to a significant school failure especially in our education system. You know all subjects require the ability to read so if a student were not able to read she would not be able to learn. I think there are two important skills, which increase the effectiveness of reading; distinction words, and reading comprehension skills, both are very important in teaching reading and most importantly is not teach these skills by old teaching methods like listening and learning things by heart, these skills should be taught by training and practice. I should train the students through using different kind of teaching methods</p>
306	StA S2	We also suffer from a confused category (slow learners). This category does not have their rights. The SEN teacher has to include them in the programme in spite of her burdens and draws plans for them similar to those with SpLD. The plans are not designed for this category which needs qualification like students with SpLD.
307	Tr1 S2	I wish you all the best and hope your thesis will make an impact in our education.
308	Tr2 S2	I hope that student with SpLD could be called students with less ambitions. I think that would encourage them more to learn. I think the name may have a negative impact on these students and may cause embarrassment for them.

Appendix 15: Data from Parents in School 1

309	Q	Tell me about your family? (Number of children, their grade in school)
310	Pt1 S1	I have nine children; five girls and four boys, Cd1 is the seventh child. The older daughter is 29 years old and she is married. And the youngest son is five years old and he is going to kindergarten. Cd1 is nine years old and she is studying in the fourth grade.
311	Pt2 S1	I have six children; three girls and three boys. The older child is a girl and she is studying at the university she is 22 years old. The youngest son is six years old and he is studying in primary school in first grade. Cd2 has a twin and they both study in primary school but not in the same levels. Cd2 studies in the third grade and her twin studies in the fourth grade.
312	Q	What is an ordinary day like for the children at home? (Probe about homework)
313	Pt1 S1	When she finishes the school day and returns home, she takes her lunch and then she sleeps until 5 pm. When she wakes up, she goes to Quran memorization in the mosque at 5:30 pm. When she finishes the memorization period at 6:30 pm, she returns home then I start to revise with her study for one hour to one hour and half. Sometimes her older sisters revises with her and check everything if there is any homework or any notes from the teachers.
314	Pt2 S1	When my daughter finishes her school, she sleeps in the afternoon and wakes up at 7:30 pm. Then she eats something and then I or her older sister starts to revise with her we spend one or two hours studying and doing homework after that we watch TV have dinner then she sleeps at 11:30 pm. Sometimes she stays up very late. Sometimes when I ask her to bring her bag and prepare her books to study, she shouts at me and gets nervous refusing to study. I sometimes feel very angry and hit her, or punish her. When I wake her up in the morning she refuses to have her breakfast.
315	Q	Tell me about your children's general performance at school?
316	Pt1 S1	They all did well at schools apart from one of my sons. He has a mental retardation and also Cd1; her performance in reading, writing and spelling is very low.
317	Pt2 S1	My children general performance at school is good apart from Cd2. Cd2 is not very good at reading and writing. Her handwriting is very bad. She doesn't want to go to school, her twin is different she is very good at school and she is in the fourth grade now but Cd2 is still in the third grade.
318	Q	Has any of your children repeated classes or found not to be performing as expected at school? If yes – please tell me more about it?
319	Pt1	No only one son has mental retardation, he wasn't performing

	S1	good at school since the first grade, and the school then contact us and sent him to the diagnosis centre in the MoE. Then we identified that my son has this disability and he was sent to a special school for mantel retardation. For Cd1 I wanted that to repeat her first grade, however the teachers and the head teacher didn't agree with me. I noticed that her results were not very good her level was very low I thought if she didn't start correctly, she would not be able to continue in her study.
320	Pt2 S1	She was the only one of my children who repeated her second grade. She used to live with her grandmother. Her grandmother took her when she was three months old. She wanted to look after her and she loved her a lot. She offered her with everything she wants. She stayed with her grandmother until she was six years old and refused to send her to kindergarten and thought that she was still young. She never encouraged her to study, so she did not know anything about reading or writing. Her grandmother lives in the north of the city while we live in the south. When she was around seven years old, she entered a school close to her grandmother's house. Because Cd2 was very spoilt, she refused to go to kindergarten when she was at the age of six and her grandmother did not force her, she said 'oh she is so young, it really breaks my heart when I weak her up in the morning, she would be fine just let her stay and play for another year then when she reaches seven I will take her to the school' this is what her grandmother said
321	Q	Has the school ever contacted you about your child's performance? (if yes – tell me more about it)
322	Pt1 S1	Yes from the first grade they always send us the results every month and also send any results for any tests that she takes. But in the second grade the school contacted us and informed us about her problem. Since that time they keep sending us her results. Classroom teachers and the SEN teacher record everything about her performance in a notebook for us
323	Pt2 S1	Yes, the school informed us that she may have SpLD and she needs assessment when she was in her second grade. We first wondered why? The school sent us information about SpLD programme but we did not understand anything.
324	Q	What efforts have you made to help the child?
325	Pt1 S1	Actually I help her sometimes with her studies; I revise with her but honestly before Cd1 enters the primary school I never tried to teach her. She never held the pensile; also we did not send her to kindergarten so we did not know about her difficulties in reading and writing until she went to primary school.
326	Pt2 S1	When I teach Cd2 reading at home she does not want to read from books, I noticed that she understands and recite very quickly when I teach her orally. She prefers to repeat after me and learn things by heart rather than reading from books. She

		hates reading from books. When I ask her to read she recites what she learns but she does not look at the book. I try my best to encourage her to study. Maybe in the past I use to be very tough with her but now after knowing her difficulties I encourage her, I reward her and buy her a lot of gifts when she preforms good at school. Her father and I try our best to offer her all what she needs; we want her to finish her primary school.
327	Q	What do you see as the causes of your child's learning difficulties
328	Pt1 S1	Well, she has an older brother who suffers from mental retardation, when the school contacted us regarding this child's difficulties; her father and I were very concerned that she might have the same problem. But she was different from her brother, when I revise with her she does not focus and get easily distracted; she has very little attention span.
329	Pt2 S1	Honestly we thought it is a disease, her dad and I thought it might be something serious with brain problem
330	Q	Do you consider your child as having a disability? (If Yes- which one. If No – what do you think is the problem with her?)
331	Pt1 S1	No she doesn't have a disability, she is ok she understands but we didn't push her to study and we didn't give her support. I was very concerned and scared when her school contacted us and told us that she needs to be registered in the SpLD programme in her school. At the beginning we refused because we thought that programme is for stupid students and she is not stupid she understands but we did not pay attention to her at home
332	Pt2 S1	No she doesn't have a disability. She is very normal just like her twin. She's just a spoilt girl. She always looks for excuses jut to skip school or when she doesn't want to do her homework. She sometimes pretends to be sick or sleepy. Sometimes she becomes very angry and screams her head out saying she doesn't want to study or to do homework. Sometimes she stays up until very late until 2:30 or 3:00 am. When I wake her up in the morning she does not want to go to the school and screams very loud saying that 'I hate the school, I don't want to go to the school' I am really sick of her bad behaviour, sometimes she pretends to be sick just to avoid going to the school. As I told you before her grandmother was the reason for her spoilt behaviour. I can't force her to go to the school, her dad also doesn't want me to shout at her or hit her, we always receive letters from the school about her absences
333	Q	Is there any assessment that has been done to determine why your child does not perform as expected?
334	Pt1 S1	Yes in her school with the SEN teacher, they assessed her in reading, writing and spelling. Also in maths, she doesn't have problems in maths but in reading and writing and spelling. The

		SEN teacher sent a letter before she did the assessment, at first her dad refused but later when we understand what SpLD is we accepted it. After that the SEN teacher informed us again that she did the assessment and sent us a copy of her report. We glad that we agreed.
335	Pt2 S1	Yes the school sent a letter informing us that she faces difficulties in reading, writing and spelling and she might have SpLD and they want to do an assessment for her in order to enrol her in the SpLD programme in the school. The school asked us to sign the letter but we refused. Then the SEN teacher talked to me on phone and asked me to visit the school to meet her with some mothers. I attended the meeting and then she discussed with us and explained to us the programme and what SpLD meant. After that the SEN teacher did the assessment and then after that my daughter was registered in the SpLD programme.
336	Q	Were you involved or any family member involved in the assessment of your child? (If yes – tell me more about the assessment procedure)
337	Pt1 S1	Yes actually the SEN teacher called me before she did the assessment because her dad refused to sign the letter. She explained to me how important this assessment was and that the programme was not for lazy or stupid students but for supporting students like my daughter. I talked to my husband I tried to convince him then he agreed. After that we signed the letter and agreed that our daughter be enrolled in the SpLD programme.
338	Pt2 S1	Yes, the school informed us that they couldn't do the assessment before we gave our consent, then the SEN teacher invited me and told me more about this assessment, I understood that the assessment was like tests or exams. Then after that we agreed that the assessment be done and after that our daughter was accepted in the SpLD programme.
339	Q	Do you consider the assessment done to your child adequate? (Probe for reasons)
340	Pt1 S1	I think yes, it is good to have such assessment and support like that. It helps the students to identify their problems and help them to overcome their difficulties when they are still young
341	Pt2 S1	Yes the assessment helps us to identify our daughter's difficulties in reading, writing and spelling. We used to think that she hated the school or that she was just a spoilt girl
342	Q	How is your child supported at school so that she can improve?
343	Pt1 S1	She attends classes with her SEN teacher in the resource room twice a week, in reading, writing and spelling. The resource room is different from the classroom and it contains things unavailable in the class; like computer and games. My daughter likes the resource room very much and she is very pleased, because it has space for playing. There are few students in the resource room so

		her concentration is high.
344	Pt2 S1	She attends classes with her SEN teacher in the resource room twice a week, in reading, writing and spelling. I don't know that much about the resource room but I have been to this room once and it was completely different from the classroom. Then I realised that my daughter would take two classes a week in this room with the SEN teacher.
345	Q	Do you consider the support given to your child at school adequate? (Probe for reasons)
346	Pt1 S1	I think Cd1 needs more sessions in the resource room. In the classroom the number of students is very big, which makes it hard for her to concentrate as she looks here and there, she just keeps talking to her friends and doesn't concentrate on the writing and reading sessions. Therefore, I think that when she learns alone, she would be able to concentrate more than being in a group.
347	Pt2 S1	Yes it is very good and helps the students with SpLD to overcome their difficulties. I think the students with SpLD just need to spend more time with the SEN teacher in this room
348	Q	Are you involved by the school in helping the child? (If yes – how?)
349	Pt1 S1	Yes they always write for me to follow her up at home especially when she has tests.
350	Pt2 S1	Yes the classroom teacher always writes in my daughter's notebook she always comments like 'if Cd2 studies and revises at home her levels would be better but in general she is good'. They keep writing if there is something important or during exams in order to follow her up.
351	Q	Your child is occasionally taken to the resource room; tell me what you think about it?
352	Pt1 S1	At the beginning we thought that would affect my child, because the other students and classroom teachers would think that she is different and she goes to the resource room because she is lazy or stupid. Also people would ask me about that and would think she has a disability while she is ok and normal, honestly we were very worried about her future marriage that's why her dad refused first. But now I want her to go to the resource room.
353	Pt2 S1	Well I told you before we knew anything about the resource room we just refused because we did not want people talk about my daughter. If some women heard that my daughter goes to the resource room they would talk and think my daughter has a disability or stupid so we just wanted to protect our daughter from the people thoughts. Later when I realised that the resource room is a class and the SEN teacher teaches the students within their school we felt very happy and changed our thinking about the programme.
354	Q	Do you see any improvement to your child's performance at

		school since she joined the resource room?
355	Pt1 S1	I noticed big improvement in my daughter's reading and writing after attending the classes with her SEN teacher in the recourse room. I want my daughter to attend more classes, two classes a week is not enough.
356	Pt2 S1	Honestly the idea of the resource room is very good. I noticed a lot of changes on my daughter's performance. Her level in reading and writing is much better than before. Her handwriting became very clear and readable. My daughter loves the school more now and every time she goes to the resource room she talks to me about everything she did in the recourse room with her SEN teacher, for example, the SEN teacher said to me I was excellent today, or she gave me a star or a gift. There is much care from the SEN teacher in this room and I have seen that on her reaction and performance. I am very happy that my daughter studies in this programm and I want her to continue. But two lessons a week is not enough, they need to spend more time with the SEN teacher.
357	Q	What is your opinion about including students with SpLD in the regular schools?
358	Pt1 S1	This is right for them; they should not be taken from the regular schools. They don't have any disabilities; I don't want to send my daughter to special school.
359	Pt2 S1	I have no problem with that; actually I would never send my daughter to a special school because she is not disabled. Thank to the MoE they provided these programmes in regular schools.
360	Q	From your point of view, what other challenges do you think your child faces at school?
361	Pt1 S1	I think the other students call them lazy and stupid. She always tells me that she doesn't have friends in the school, her classroom mates not helpful. She always complains about them they shout at her, they call her lazy, they don't sit with her, and she is alone because they think she is lazy. Also her classroom teachers always write comments like she did not do well in such subject or test. She didn't complete her homework; she did not participate in the classroom activities and so on. Sometimes they give her zero in her test. They don't see her difficulties or even take it into account. They should encourage her to learn. But when I saw her in the resource room, she was totally different; she was happy and very confidant that's why I want her to be there for more time.
362	Pt2 S1	I think the curriculums especially Arabic literacy and maths. My daughter face difficulties to understand them I think the curriculums are not good for them and very difficult for her. Also she has fears of her classroom teacher. She always tells me that she doesn't like her classroom teachers because she is very nervous and shout at her when she doesn't reply or understand

		the lesson.
363	Q	What do you think is the best educational provision for students with SpLD?
364	Pt1 S1	I think what is provided for them now is very good and thank to the SEN teacher and for the MoE for providing such programm for our children. The provision is excellent but it would be better, if it has been concentrated; for example, two class periods per day instead of one class period, because I have noticed great improvement in my daughter's academic level.
365	Pt2 S1	The student with SpLD study a whole day with the SEN teacher in the resource room instead of two classes a week. I mean the student with SpLD would spend a whole day form 7:30 am until 1pm. The SEN teacher shall be able to revise with them everything and spend more hours with them teaching them and listen to their reading and help them with their writing and spelling or with maths. In this day for example the students with SpLD should be observed in terms of their understanding, their attention, their responses to the SEN teachers. One day a week instead of two hours a week.
366	Q	How does the MoE support you in the education of your child? (Do you consider the support adequate?)
367	Pt1 S1	<p>I would say yes because the programm they provide for my child is free and I just want more classes in the resource room. But at the same time I think it is not adequate because my daughter may finish her IEPs then the support give to her would be stopped. Those students need support in all their education not only for one or two years.</p> <p>I never have been to the MoE I always talk to the school and to the SEN teacher; the SEN teacher is very friendly and helpful; May Allah bless her, she doesn't neglect my daughter. She contacts me regularly. Sometimes she sends papers and notes with my daughter. Sometimes, she calls me and arraigns meeting to see me in the school.</p>
368	Pt2 S1	The support is given to my daughter by providing SEN teacher and a resource room in her school. The support is good honestly the school called me many times regarding Cd2's problems. I go whenever they send a letter or call me on phone. Sometime the SEN teacher calls me on phone when she notices my daughter's level is lower than before. Or if she wants to informs us with anything else about Layan. Sometimes they write notes in her notebook like the student should revise some words or text or paragraph at home or she has test tomorrow in some words and so on. But the support is not enough as they told me when she finishes her IEP and made a good progress she will leave the programm in order to give a chance to another student with SpLD. I think they should be supported in all their grades. The

		support of the SEN teacher and the provision of the resource room are really good but not enough. The students should attend more classes in the resource room. They also should be supported until they graduate from primary school.
369	Q	What suggestions would you make for improving the education of children experiencing the same difficulties as yours?
370	Pt1 S1	I hope teachers could concentrate more on their teaching methods for reading and writing. I want more classes for them in the resource room. I would like to add a sport class period. Our schools ignore sports classes for girls. I would like computer is taught as a basic subject not as an optional, currently we pay the fees for my daughter to take computer classes, (they take our money and say that the computers are broken down). She didn't learn anything in computer. We didn't complain, because this isn't included in the competence of the school, it is a contracting company responsible for holding computer courses in the primary schools and the student that has the desire shall record her name and pay the fees.
371	Pt2 S1	I would suggest that the SEN teacher keep talking to classroom teachers and other students in the school about how to deal with students with SpLD. They should deal with them in a nice way; they should not hurt them and never deal with them like they are different from other students. They classroom teacher should never make them feel embarrassed or their levels are lower than other students. They should take care of their feelings.
372	Q	Is there any other information that I may have left out which you possibly feel may be useful to my study?
373	Pt1 S1	Now I am very happy that my daughter is supported with SEN teacher and SpLD programme. But I think a lot about her future. I hope these programmes are also continued in intermediate and secondary schools.
374	Pt2 S1	I want my daughter to continue studying with the SEN teachers in all her levels in primary schools. Also I hope to offer these programmes in all intermediate and secondary schools.

Appendix 16: Data from Parents in School 2

375	Q	Tell me about your family? (Number of children, their grade in school)
376	Pt1 S2	I have six children; three boys and three girls, the oldest is 25 and the youngest is seven years old. Cd1 is the fifth child and she is nine years old. She is studying the third grade. My husband is a doctor at a university in KSA.
377	Pt2 S2	I have four children; two boys and two girls. The oldest son is 23 years old and he is studying at the university the youngest is a girl and she is four and half years old. Cd2 is nine years old and she is studying in the third grade.
378	Q	What is an ordinary day like for the children at home? (Probe about homework)
379	Pt1 S2	We wake up at 5:30 am; I prepare breakfast for my children before they go to their schools. Cd1's father drives them to schools. She should be in her school exactly at 7 am. Once she finishes the school I prepare the lunch for her she eats and after she ends her lunch, she watches TV, until she sleeps. Sometimes she sleeps until 6 pm. I sometimes wake her up to revise with her. We open the school bag and begin to do the homework and study for two hours and sometimes more than two hours. Then we have the dinner at 9 pm then Cd1 sleeps at 10:30 pm
380	Pt2 S2	We wake up at 5 am. I prepare the breakfast for my children and my husband. Then Cd2's father drives the children to their schools. They all should attend their schools at 7 am. When she finishes her school her dad picks her up. We have lunch together then she rests until 5pm. Sometimes she plays with her iPad or watch TV. Then at 5 pm I start to revise with her for one or two hours. We have our dinner at 9pm then she sleeps at 10:30pm
381	Q	Tell me about your children's general performance at school?
382	Pt1 S2	They all performed well at school but Cd1's performance was a bit different from her brothers and sisters. She struggled a bit when she was in her first grade. I noticed that her reading and writing was not good. I met her classroom teacher for the first grade and spoke to her about my daughter's problem. The teacher said that this is a normal problem and my daughter would pass the first grade, and would overcome her problems in reading and writing when she upgraded to the second grade. However her problem continued, but I remember that her classroom teacher in the second grade was excellent in her teaching and in everything. My daughter loved her some much, I notice that her level improved and she became able to read and right well. She loved the school and all subjects based upon loving her teacher; especially after enrolling her in the SpLD program, she loved her SEN teacher and even her performance improved at home and she was able to read. After she has moved to the third grade, her level decreased

		slightly due to the changing of her classroom teacher, the new classroom teacher was different. She had fears from that classroom teacher and she always said to me that 'she frightens me, I am afraid of her and I can't read in the classroom'
383	Pt2 S2	My children' performance in general is good. But Cd2 was struggling from the first grade in reading, writing and spelling. She had difficulty to write or spell the words. Sometimes she mixes between the sounds of the letters.
384	Q	Has any of your children repeated classes or found not to be performing as expected at school? If yes – please tell me more about it?
385	Pt1 S2	No never repeated any classes
386	Pt2 S2	No never repeated any classes
387	Q	Has the school ever contacted you about your child's performance? (if yes – tell me more about it)
388	Pt1 S2	Yes, we received a letter from the school informing us that her performance at school was very low and she needed to be assessed. They also sent some brochures that define SpLDs and information about SpLD programme and resource room. Her classroom teachers always write about her progress in her notebook. They always let me know about her performance.
389	Pt2 S2	Yes, when they noticed my daughter performance at school was low they sent us a letter telling us that she might have difficulties in reading, writing and spelling.
390	Q	What efforts have you made to help the child?
391	Pt1 S2	I devote more time for her, I give her books, and I push her to read frequently to improve her reading. I try to provide her with everything she needs in her study. I let her spend some time in solving some exercise on the laptop (there are CDs for the Arabic literacy and there is a combination of exercises and games) I let her use the laptop and play with these games. We have a big library at home which contains different kinds of books, but we don't read them, only my husband reads them, but me and my children we actually don't read from books that much, we read from phones, laptops, and newspapers, and of course we read the holy Quran every Friday.
392	Pt2 S2	I encourage her in general, encourage her to learn, develop her hobbies, I want her to be like her brothers and sister, when someone asks her something I want her to response not to be silent. I encourage her to communicate with people without any fears.
393	Q	What do you see as the causes of your child's learning difficulties
394	Pt1 S2	When we first heard about SpLD from the school, we thought it is a handicap, but the students don't have any obvious disabilities and also their brains are normal, they are not stupid but other things around them might affect their attention in the classroom or at home so they can't learn. Like the students in the classroom, the classroom teachers don't understand them, the classroom environment and so on. Honestly when

		we first heard that my child had SpLD we were very concerned also my husband did not have any information about SpLD, also he thought that this is not a handicap. He felt sad for her but at the same time he did not refuse to enrol Cd1 in the programme of course after discussing the situation with the SEN teacher.
395	Pt2 S2	I think the causes are with the teaching not with these students. My child is very clever and very smart. She is not stupid and she is not lazy because she tries to learn and tries very hard. But I think these students couldn't find the right classroom teachers who can understand their difficulties and support them
396	Q	Do you consider your child as having a disability? (If Yes- which one. If No – what do you think is the problem with her?)
397	Pt1 S2	No she does not have any disability she is normal and very smart. It's only that she does not concentrate. When I try to teach her at home I notice that she is like 'absent-minded'. She looks here and there; sometimes I force her to focus. Also she is very naughty she always fights with her younger sister.
398	Pt2 S2	The school said my daughter has a disability, but I think my daughter is not disabled I know that she is struggling with her reading and writing. I can't call her lazy or stupid because she is really clever. The SEN teacher talked to us and explained what learning disability means. She said that the students are not stupid, and there is nothing wrong with their IQ but they have difficulties in reading or writing and they need additional support.
399	Q	Is there any assessment that has been done to determine why your child does not perform as expected?
400	Pt1 S2	Yes, the school contacted us when they noticed that my child doesn't perform well in school. So they took our permission to do the assessment for her.
401	Pt2 S2	Yes the school contacted us about my daughter difficulties. They did some tests to her and the SEN teacher informed me by her feedback.
402	Q	Were you involved or any family member involved in the assessment of your child? (If yes – tell me more about the assessment procedure)
403	Pt1 S2	Yes, the school contacted me when she was in her second grade; they sent us a letter with information about SpLD and the programme in the school. In the letter they explained that they want to assess her in reading, writing and spelling because she may have SpLD. The SEN teacher couldn't do the assessment until I totally understood what SpLD is. Also the SEN teacher explained that she is going to test her in reading, writing and spelling. That's all what I know. I was not there when the SEN teacher did the assessment but she informed us and sent us the feedback.
404	Pt2 S2	Yes, the SEN teacher took our permission before she conducted the assessment to my child. She explained to me everything which I understood and then gave her permission to conduct the assessment
405	Q	Do you consider the assessment done to your child adequate?

		(Probe for reasons)
406	Pt1 S2	Yes the assessment help us to know about the difficulties was facing in reading, writing and spelling.
407	Pt2 S2	I think yes, without the assessment we wouldn't have known about my daughter difficulties.
408	Q	How is your child supported at school so that she can improve?
409	Pt1 S2	The school provided her with SEN teacher and she attends classes in resource room with her SEN teacher twice a week. The SEN teacher supports my child in reading, writing and spelling and tries to improve her skills in literacy.
410	Pt2 S2	My child is supported with SEN teacher. The SE teacher take her to a resource room which is a class but different from the regular classroom. The SEN teaches my daughter in this room and supports her in reading, writing and spelling
411	Q	Do you consider the support given to your child at school adequate? (Probe for reasons)
412	Pt1 S2	The support is good but I think the SEN teacher should give them more than two classes in the resource room. Two lessons a week are not enough
413	Pt2 S2	The support is really good but two classes a week are not enough.
414	Q	Are you involved by the school in helping the child? (If yes – how?)
415	Pt1 S2	Yes, the classroom teachers and the SEN teacher always write to me to help my daughter and follow her up at home. They write in the notebook. Sometimes the SEN teacher calls me on phone and asks me to revise with my child some particular words or texts because she will test her in the next day. They are in touch with me all the time
416	Pt2 S2	Yes, the SEN teacher always writes in my daughter notebook, also her classroom teacher. Whenever they want me to follow my daughter up or revise with her or tell me about her progress.
417	Q	Your child is occasionally taken to the resource room; tell me what you think about it?
418	Pt1 S2	Well first when the school informed us, we were a bit concerned. Her older sister was worried and thought that she has no disability. We thought that room was for disabled students. We all had no idea about the programme and her dad too was a bit sad. I thought she was not stupid but I wanted her to join that programme for her benefits and also to overcome her difficulties in reading and writing. Honestly I had some concerns thinking that this is a serious disability at the beginning but after meeting the SEN teacher and talking to her, she explained to me everything about these difficulties and that the children are normal but they just need additional support from the resource room. Her dad wished that she did not have these difficulties and felt sad for her but he did not refuse to enrol her in the programme.
419	Pt2 S2	At the beginning, I was a bit worried because what people would think of my child. We thought that the resource room was for lazy students. But when I visited the SEN teacher and she explained to me why my daughter should be taken to the resource room, I was very happy and

		accepted to idea of my child having some lessons in the resource room. I thought her future was more important; I don't care about what people think or say, it is important to think of my daughter's future than anything else.
420	Q	Do you see any improvement to your child's performance at school since she joined the resource room?
421	Pt1 S2	Yes the level of my child remarkably improved. I was trying a lot with her at home but never noticed any improvement, but after she attended some classes with the SEN teacher in the recourse room, she has improved a lot.
422	Pt2 S2	Yes huge improvement in her reading and writing.
423	Q	What is your opinion about including students with SpLD in the regular schools?
424	Pt1 S2	I think they should not be taught separately because it is unfair. Students with SpLD are not stupid or lazy. They just have some difficulties and if they find the right support they will be good. Also their confidence would be much better if they are treated like other students.
425	Pt2 S2	This is their right in education. These students should be taught in regular schools. The head teacher, the classroom teachers and the SEN teacher should encourage student with difficulties to feel free to interact with other students in the school. They should group them together in some school activities, allow them to do activities together so that we can built a cohesive society
426	Q	From your point of view, what other challenges do you think your child faces at school?
427	Pt1 S2	My child doesn't focus in the classroom, she always complain that other students in the classroom disturb her attention. The heat in the classroom too disturbs her concentration. The fighting between the students; especially inside the classroom in the spare class periods. My daughter always complains about that other students in the classroom hit her or fight with her. Some students call her lazy. Also the students have a lot of spare time and they spend it fighting or speaking with other friends. My daughter tries to be silent and sometimes she does her homework in the spare time. She doesn't benefit form her time by doing things she likes or even classroom teachers don't try to play with the students.
428	Pt2 S2	In the school I remember once she complained to me about one girl who was making fun of her reading, so as I said before the problem was with the school. The school should make awareness for other students about how to treat them and how to make friends with them. The other problem is when other people get to know that our child has a problem, in every house there are some secrets that should be kept within the family; there is no need to tell people about my daughter's difficulties. People won't understand her difficulties and would call her stupid or retarded, just as we did when we first heard of it, we had no idea what it meant but when the school explained to

		us we understood the condition but other people and students don't understand.
429	Q	What do you think is the best educational provision for students with SpLD?
430	Pt1 S2	Such programme should continue, because the SEN teachers assist the students to overcome their difficulties. I think the best educational provision for students with SpLD to increase their time in the resource room, two classes a week is not enough.
431	Pt2 S2	I think the idea of the resource room and the support of the SEN teacher is really good but they need to improve it to better. Also the students need to spend more time with the SEN teachers.
432	Q	How does the MoE support you in the education of your child? (Do you consider the support adequate?)
433	Pt1 S2	The MoE offer the school with SpLD programme and thank to them because the school is very close to our home. Also the programme is free so we don't have to pay for our daughter to have classes with the SEN teacher. The SEN teacher contacts me from time to time to check on my daughter progress and whenever she wants to meet me she writes to me or calls me on phone, so I think the support so far is good. I just want my child to be supported until she graduates from primary school. The SEN teacher told us whenever she finished her IEP then she would be no longer supported. I think the students with SpLD need to be supported in all their education stages because these difficulties can't be treated it still with them in every level. With the continuous support they would be able to overcome these difficulties.
434	Pt2 S2	The support is good but not enough, they provided the school with SEN teacher and resource room which very good. But the students need more classes in the resource room. Two classes a week are not enough. Also the support provided for them only for a year or two. Whenever the students finish their IEPs they are no longer provided with these classes. I think they need to be supported in all their grades. When they finish their IEPs another one should be designed according to their new levels and so on.
435	Q	What suggestions would you make for improving the education of children experiencing the same difficulties as yours?
436	Pt1 S2	I would suggest that the classroom environment should be like the resource room. I would change the air conditioners because my daughter always complains from the intense heat in the classroom so she can't focus on her lessons. Classroom teachers should control the behaviour of other students so they don't hurt students with SpLD. Also the students should spend their spare periods doing useful things.
437	Pt2 S2	I would love to prepare workshops for them in order to develop their hobbies. I would provide the classrooms with 'smart board' I would include the technology in their teaching methods. I would change the schoolyard 'the playground' because the playground in my daughter's school is really disappointing. It looks sad. I would make garden, and games in the playground; I would

		<p>change the school canteen into cafeteria with tables and provide very healthy food for the students. I would design a room or club and put everything in this room e.g. smart games, smart board, projectors and so on.</p> <p>I also would include a clinic in each school; there should be a clinic and at least a nurse for the students' health. Especially those students with difficulties they need to be under care even in the school.</p> <p>Teachers should take training and attend a lot of workshops so they can deal with these students, teach them, understand them and understand their difficulties.</p> <p>I would like to provide the schools with transports, each school should has buses for the students, especially for those who live far away from the school. I would change all schools to be like this.</p>
438	Q	Is there any other information that I may have left out which you possibly feel may be useful to my study?
439	Pt1 S2	I want these programmes to continue in the intermediate and secondary schools. Also at universities. Students with SpLD should be supported in all their education level not only in primary stage.
440	Pt2 S2	I hope to see my child studying in the university in the future, this is my dream and her father's dream and we will do our best to make this dream comes true. I know currently there is no programme for students with SpLD in the universities but maybe in the future things would change. I want my daughter be independent and successful in life.

Appendix 17: Data from SEN Supervisor

441	Q	What is your role in the MoE?
442	R	I work as a SEN Supervisor. I supervise SEN teachers, and provide them with the support they need with SpLD programmes. I also choose schools In order to provide them with SpLD programmes.
443	Q	How long have you been in this position?
444	R	I can say my experience in teaching and supervision is about 17 years now.
445	Q	What qualifications are required for someone to hold this position?
446	R	Bachelor degree in special educational needs. Or a degree in Arabic or maths plus higher diploma in SEN. We cant employ someone who cant carry one of these degree to teach students with SpLD.
447	Q	Can you please tell me about the educational programmes for students with SpLD in primary school in Jeddah? (Do all the school have these programmes?)
448	R	<p>These programmes started in 1997/1998. It started with individual efforts from SEN teachers and educators who studied abroad and brought the idea of these programmes to be applied in our schools. The programmes focus on identifying students with reading, writing and spelling difficulties. Also students who have difficulties in maths.</p> <p>No, not all schools have these programmes, we only have around 34 primary schools that offer SpLD programmes, six intermediate schools and four secondary school. Schools are selected after meeting certain conditions. For example in one of the districts which has 11 sub districts, each sub district has one school with SpLD programme. These of course are not enough. There are some districts with very few SpLD programmes because we consider the population of each region including the parent's commitment and the resident's needs.</p> <p>When the SpLD programme experience started in KSA it was based on the idea of existence of students having difficulties in as well as their needs for different teaching methods. As there are countries advanced in the field, this was the stream from which SpLD programmes idea emerged. KSA like other countries started to pay attention to students with SpLD. Even it began from the medical field but this concept has been already crystallized. We here benefited from others experiences as we observed the severe need to such programmes at our schools.</p>
449	Q	Is there a policy on SpLD programmes? (If yes - How does the MoE ensure that the policy is implemented in all the school?)

450	R	<p>Yes, there are general education policies but for SpLD we just follow the MoE regulations. Such regulations have not been changed since 2007. For example there are two types of circulars, Boys Education Management circulars and Girls Education Management circulars. The boy's circular is more detailed and we benefit a lot from it. That is to say such circulars are general for all teachers including SEN teachers. There are no circulars for SpLD.</p> <p>We have a guidebook for SpLD teachers which was developed by the SEN teachers. After several revisions the guidebook was accepted and then distributed to all SEN teachers in all schools that offer SpLD programme. I make sure to send a complete pack to every SEN teacher. I also visit them in order to check that the SEN teacher has a full copy of the latest and updated copy of the guidebook and check how the programme is going on.</p>
451	Q	Do you consider the policy on SpLD effective? (Probe for more information)
452	R	<p>No they are not, we need a policy for SpLD, for this category only. What we have is a general SEN policy. Even the term SpLD doesn't exist in the policy. We use LD to describe students with reading, writing and spelling difficulties including maths difficulties as well. The guidebook is not specific; it is just instructions for SEN teachers on how to identify, assess, and teach students with LD. Also it does not guarantee the students with LD rights to education neither does it specify the actual roles of the SEN teachers. For example, although SEN are not allowed to take extra classes other than in the resource room. However, some head teachers send them to regular classes especially when there is a teacher who is absent or is busy without considering that SEN teachers are usually very busy preparing for students attending the resource room. I always try to advise the head teachers every time I visit schools but because we don't have a clear policy they just ignore that and treat SEN teachers just like classroom teachers.</p>
453	Q	What does SpLD mean to you?
454	R	<p>Academically, I'll you tell that they are students suffering from one or more dysfunctions of psychological processes demanding ... (the Ministry's definition).</p> <p>If I talk about the concept, these students are in need for help, which must be provided to them in order to complete their life. If a student were not able to read, this would affect her psychological status negatively. So, we don't focus only on helping students in academic aspects but we also consider the psychological matters. There are some students who get ashamed of their classmates and do not like to read loudly. If the teacher is excellent she can change such feelings with self-confidence. Therefore, such students need help.</p>
455	Q	What do you think are the causes of SpLD?
456	R	I believe the causes are the classroom environment and teachers.

		When I studied about SpLD at the university everything was theoretical. But after many years of teaching and working as SEN supervisor I found that teachers including SEN teachers work just for money. They don't pay much attention to students with SpLD. They ignore them or even don't teach them properly. Some just do their work for the sake of it is just to show me that they have done their work. The classroom teachers don't go for further training, they don't know even how to deal with them or how to teach them in the classrooms and just blame the education system or the educational supervisors. Students with SpLD are left without support, they are not even identified properly, and they are just ignored in their classrooms.
457	Q	On average how many SEN teachers are there per school in Jeddah?
458	R	Not all schools have SEN teachers. We have one SEN teacher in the primary schools that offer SpLD programmes. We choose the schools according to certain conditions as I mentioned before.
459	Q	Do you consider than number adequate?
460		I think yes the SEN teachers don't teach the whole students in the school. They just focus on students with SpLD and they only have 18 students a year. They should be able to manage this number.
461	Q	Can you please describe the identification and assessment procedure for students with SpLD? (Probe about the methods and staff involved)
462	R	<p>There is a committee in each school, which contains the head teacher, SEN teacher, the classroom teacher, the student advisor, parents and the student. My job here is following up this committee and make sure they are doing their job, as it should be. The committee should also contain psychologists or speech and language therapists but our schools don't have such specialists. We have diagnostic centre here in the ministry and the students are referred to this centre if they have other kind of disabilities such as autism, mental retardation, hearing disabilities or any other severe disabilities.</p> <p>SEN teachers diagnose the students and the committee make the decision if a student has SpLD or other disability. The committee works as a team so each member knows exactly their duty. For example the classroom teacher should report the student progress to the student advisor especially if the student's academic progress was very low in literacy and mathematics. Then the student advisor starts her work and collects some information from the student's file and also contacts the SEN teacher. The SEN teacher then carry on collecting information about the students with collaboration with the student advisor, they collect information like academic progress from the first grade in literacy and mathematics, medical history for the student and also family medical history. Then the SEN teacher conduct observations with collaboration with the classroom teacher,</p>

		<p>she attends some literacy and mathematics classes in order to take some notes about the student. After that the SEN teacher invite the student to her resource room and interview her in general without conducting any diagnosis at this stage. She just talks to the student to find out more about her difficulties. Then the SEN make her mind and write a letter to the parents in order to obtain their permission, let them know about their daughter situation and her low level and the SEN teacher expectations about her difficulties. Also she should attach leaflet and information sheet with the letter, which explain SpLD and the programm in general.</p> <p>The SEN teacher prepares the letter, the head teacher signs it and the student advisor sends it to parents. Parents then respond to the letter either they accept it or refuse it, some even ignore to respond completely.</p> <p>Anyway after obtaining the permission from parents, the SEN teacher carry on her work and prepare the student for diagnosis. She set up an appointment and interviews the student for the second time but this time with diagnosis. She gives the student some particular tests in literacy and mathematics. When she finishes she then corrects the tests and scores the student according to a particular method, which is explained to them in the guidebook. If the student did not reach to a particular score then she decides to role her in the programme. She then write a report about the diagnosis outcomes with a designed IEP which meet the students difficulties in literacy or mathematics, I should have a copy of that report and also she sends a copy to parents letting them know about the outcomes and the IEP of their student.</p> <p>So this is basically the producer followed by most SEN teachers it calls transferring method, and it seems like the preferred and easiest methods for them.</p> <p>There are other methods like survey but I did not see any SEN teacher follow that.</p> <p>Maybe in the past but nowadays the number of the students are getting more than before so it might be difficult for the SEN teacher to conduct a survey and mark the whole school students papers then identify those with SpLD.</p> <p>In order to judge if a student has SpLD he/she should meet the five conditions that known here in KSA. You can read these conditions in the ministry guidebook. So the SEN teacher is required to make the awareness every year about those five conditions for general teachers, head teacher and the student advisor.</p>
463	Q	What is your opinion about the assessment done to students with SpLD? (Do you consider it adequate?)

464	R	I think it is good but we lack formal and standardised assessment tests for SpLD students.
465	Q	What is the difference between the resource room and the regular classroom? (How often are students required to use the resource room in a week?)
466	R	<p>The resource room is a class but currently in our schools they lack suitable equipment of modern technology. Resource rooms in our schools don't have any furniture. They have not been equipped for more than four years. In short, the resource room is a class but the students have one to one session or in a small group.</p> <p>The high population of students in the regular classroom is an obstacle for students with SpLD in public education. High teacher – pupil ratio makes it hard for teachers to apply the teaching strategies recommended by the MoE. Another challenge with high population is that the classrooms are not well equipped to meet the needs of students with SpLD.</p>
467	Q	What is your opinion about the use of the resource room? (Do you find it productive)
468	R	<p>Yes, very productive and let me tell you something I hear a lot from classroom teachers and SEN teachers as well. They always complain about the skills taught to students with SpLD in the resource room. In the resource room the students are taught low literacy and maths skills. They are lower than the skills they are taught in their actual grade. I found this method is very productive why? SpLD is known to be international. You may find a student in the USA in grad 11 (general secondary school) and receives reading classes in primary stage because such student has variance in his study and mental levels. So, we may find a student at a higher grade but her actual level is grade one for example, so I always believe that It is supposed that SEN teachers and classroom teachers should try to improve the students' levels even if they begin from low levels. For example, would an aeroplane fly if it did not have a fuel? No, it would not. How can I ask a student to read a text while she does not master the alphabetical letters or vowels and consonants?</p> <p>So I think the teaching methods and strategies used in the resource room are very suitable and I have seen some good results on the students levels</p>
469	Q	From your point of view, what challenges do you think students with SpLD face in mainstream schools?
470	R	I think the lack of awareness from their classroom teachers; classroom teachers don't understand them and deal with them like lazy students. Other students also call them lazy. I remember in one of my visits to the schools I heard that the classroom teachers and the other students in the school call the resource room the room for lazy students. I talked to the

		SEN teacher and explain to her how important to make awareness to the school including head teachers' classroom teachers and students and change the image of the resource room. These students are affected and especially when they are withdrawn from their classrooms. So it is very important that we make the awareness for all the school staff in order to help them build their confidence.
471	Q	How does your office ensure that parents of students with SpLD are involved in the education of their children?
472	R	Well the parents are very important member is the committee. When we create a committee in the school that we provide it with SpLD programme, we make sure parents are involved in this committee and we can't accept any student in the programme with their parents permission. The SEN teacher and the school contact the parents regularly. Some parents want to see me before enrolling their children in the programme. Some SEN teachers talk to me about how difficult some parents are so I advice them to send them to the MoE so I meet up with them and explain to them the idea of the programme then they have to make their decision.
473	Q	Do you consider their involvement adequate? (Probe for more information)
474	R	Yes some parents really care about their children they accept and send their children to the resource room from the first contact with the school. Some refuse but after discussion and meeting with the SEN teachers they understand then accept. I don't think they can be involved more that that. They just need to check on their children from time to time and work with the SEN teachers and try to support their children at home. Some parents put everything on the SEN teachers' shoulder and never revise with their children at home. So I think if parents work with the school as a team their involvement would be really adequate. Also they should attend every meeting in the school whenever the school sends them invitations. This is really important to update their information about SpLD from time to time. I know how busy parents are but they need to attend to speared the awareness about SpLD, they need to listen, maybe the SEN teachers send them papers and documents but they don't read them so I think they just keep in touch with the school and the SEN teachers from time to time.
475	Q	How does your office collaborate with schools to ensure that student with SpLD receive adequate support? (What other agencies do you collaborate with?)
476	R	I collaborate with SEN teachers and head teachers. I visit the SEN teachers twice a year some times I try my best to visit them twice a term but due to the busy work I have I just don't have the chance to visit some SEN teachers two times a term. You know what I have three kind of teachers; excellent who do not need intensive visits only

		one or two visits a year are enough; these teachers do their work sincerely and their head teachers follow them. The problem appears when a teacher is new and weak. Here such teacher needs intensive visits and continuous supervision. On the other hand, head teachers sometimes do not cooperate with us as we send them follow up form but they do not activate such form (they depend that SEN supervisors take responsibility). So, SEN teacher may stay without supervision for a full semester in some cases. Sometimes I write certain instructions for these teachers and they sign that they receive them but when I ask them about it they do not read the instructions. I provide them with recourses and internet sites but they do not look up them or educate themselves.
477	Q	What is your opinion about including students with SpLD in the regular classrooms?
478	R	I think students with SpLD should stay in regular classrooms. This is the right place for them. We want to increase their confidence, we need to support them, we need to encourage them to learn, and we need them to learn actually in the regular classrooms. I think anyone who calls for their exclusion must be someone who doesn't know anything about this category and I believe that if you do not understand SpLD you won't be able to give more in this field.
479	Q	What challenges do you face working as a SEN supervisor?
480	R	<p>With regard to educational provision, in the past the MoE used to furnish resource rooms through allocating a special budget. Every school has a budget of 15.000 SAR. A few years ago, the Equipment Department in the MoE became responsible for equipping the resource room. The furniture has become very bad and unsuitable. They equip the resource room only once and do not enrich it from time to time. For example, if they receive smart boards, they don't allocate any of them to resource room.</p> <p>In addition, there is no special budget for SEN teachers or students with SpLD. SEN teachers buy teaching pens and technical things. For three to four years, the Ministry has not equipped resource rooms. We did not receive the budget for about four years. This is true and I am responsible for it, there is no equipping for resource rooms. We address the concerned bodies but for four years we have not seen anything and resource rooms almost lack of equipment.</p> <p>I visit the SEN teachers sometimes once a year or twice a year. This is one of the problems I face. I have a lot of work to do; me and another supervisor are the only two supervisors who work for SpLD in the ministry. Some SEN teachers need more visits from me. Some SEN teacher may stay without supervision for a full semester in some cases. I sometimes write certain instructions for them and they sign that they received them without even reading such instructions. I</p>

		<p>provide them with book titles and internet sites but they don't read. Some of them are new in the field having limited experience; during meetings, they only criticise.</p> <p>We here in KSA have five conditions to be met in order to classify a student as SpLD/dyslexia student class. If a student suffers from a difficulty in maths, reading, expression, handwriting, or dictation, the class teacher shall refer such student to the SEN teacher who starts to gather information about the student. If the five conditions are met, the student is joined the SpLD programme. If not, such student does not join the SpLD programme. However, there is another class which was faced and taken a lot at school; the slow learners class. In the last period, we try hard not to include them in the programme due to the misconception of the two classes and the variance between mental levels even we faced many troubles with parents.</p>
481	Q	What do you think is the best educational provision for students with SpLD?
482	R	I see that SpLD programmes currently go through a stability stage but the field still needs much of development, research, and more studies.
483	Q	What proposals would you make for improving the education of children with SpLD?
484	R	<p>Create a policy for SpLD. Resource rooms are not provided with more technological sets. For instance, SpLD programmes need a computer and smart devices such as iPad, etc. I think that the iPad is so important for use in SpLD programmes. There are technological means to be available at resource room but none of them are available now. We need standardized assessment.</p> <p>We lack using technology; research and studies centre in the field of SpLD. I would love to improve these things. Also We need training programmes. I would like to open a research and studies centre belonging to the MoE to do more research about SpLD in KSA and how to develop SpLD programmes. Also I would send our SEN teachers to the advanced countries such as the US, UK, and Japan; for example, send a teacher or two annually to benefit from their experience. We also need to allocate budgets, as we need financial support for development.</p>
485	Q	Is there any other information that I may have left out which you possibly feel may be useful to my study?
486	R	I would love to be in a higher position in the MoE I would love to be a decision maker who is able to sign enforceable documents all over the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and then I would be able to change and develop.

Appendix 18: Data from Students in School 1

487	Q	Tell me about your family (brothers, sisters, position in the family?)
488	Cd1 S1	I have four sisters and four brothers. I am the seventh I have two brothers younger than me.
489	Cd2 S1	I have two sisters and three brothers. We are all six and one of my sisters is my twin. We are the fifth between my sisters and brothers.
490	Q	What are your hobbies?
491	Cd1 S1	I like drawing.
492	Cd2 S1	I like drawing and I like watching cartoons a lot I sometimes watch them with subtitles but I cannot catch all the words so I only read one or two words. The subtitles move very fast.
493	Q	What is your favourite subject?
494	Cd1 S1	I like art and cooking classes.
495	Cd2 S1	My favourite subject is art I like drawing and colouring things.
496	Q	Which subjects do you find difficult? (probe for reason)
497	Cd1 S1	Arabic literacy I hate reading, writing and spelling. I can't spell the words I just can't remember them. The classroom teacher gives us very difficult words. I hate doing homework, I don't have time to do them at home and sometimes I feel upset doing them, sometimes the homework is very difficult and I can't do it myself but in general I hate doing them at home.
498	Cd2 S1	I hate reading and writing, the classroom teacher forces me to read in front of the classmate I hate it because I can't read like them. This makes me feel very embarrassed
499	Q	Have you ever repeated classes? (if yes, how many times and reasons) - Can you tell me how you feel as result of repeating classes?
500	Cd1 S1	No
501	Cd2 S1	Yes I repeated my second grade. I studied my first grade in a different school. I used to live with my grandmother. I studied in a primary school close to my grandmother's house. But after a year my parents brought me home and I moved to another school. I think the subjects were very difficult and I couldn't read or write at all. So I repeated my second grade, I felt sad because I couldn't be with y sister in the same grade, she passed me now and I am still in the third grade while she is in the fourth grade.
502	Q	How do you generally feel about school? (Probe for reason)
503	Cd1 S1	I don't like school; My classroom teachers say that I am lazy.
504	Cd2 S1	I hate the school and I hate to study. I have a problem with my reading and writing. I can't read like other students. Sometimes I feel embarrassed in the classroom when I can't read like my friends, they read better than me. My classroom teacher puts a lot of pressure on me. She knows I can't read properly, but she always asks me to read in front of the students. She always calls me lazy and sleepy. She is

		very nervous and gets angry quickly when I can't read or write. She shouts at me a lot. I really don't like her. My friends in the classroom, sometimes they help me but sometimes not
505	Q	How do your parents support you perform better at school? (Do you consider that support adequate?)
506	Cd1 S1	My mom and my sister help with my homework and with my study at home but sometimes I just don't want to study or I prefer to do other things like watching TV or playing with my younger brothers.
507	Cd2 S1	My mom and my older sister revise with me and help me to do my homework. Sometimes my mom gets angry and hit me when I refuse to do my homework.
508	Q	What kind of learning materials are there at home (Books, magazines, computer, table, internet)
509	Cd1 S1	I like children stories but my younger brothers always play with them and throw them. I don't have a laptop or computer at home.
510	Cd2 S1	I have iPad, my older sister has a laptop and we have magazines too. My mom always read them.
511	Q	Have you been assessed to determine why you don't perform well at school? (If yes – what were you told the problem was?)
512	Cd1 S1	Yes the SEN teacher talked to me and told me that I need to do some tests in reading and writing. She told me if the test was difficult I should tell her or just leave the question and try to answer the next question. If I couldn't answer anything then I can leave the test and come back in another day to do another test. She told me also the second test will be easier and I will be able to answer it. She told me that the test is important so if I can answer anything she then will help me to do better in reading and writing.
513	Cd2 S1	Yes my SEN teacher talked to about the subjects I hate in the classroom. Then she asked me why I hate them and what are the most difficult things I hate in reading and writing. Then she told me that she will help me but first I have to do a simple test. I was scared because I hate tests and exams but she told me to answer only the questions I know and leave the difficulties questions.
514	Q	Do you consider yourself as having a disability as result of how you perform at school? (Probe for reasons)
515	Cd1 S1	I don't know what disability is. But the classroom teachers call me lazy.
516	Cd2 S1	I don't know.
517	Q	What kind of support are you given at school to improve in the subjects you don't perform well?
518	Cd1 S1	The SEN teacher takes me to the resource room and teaches me how to read and write.
519	Cd2 S1	The SEN teacher teaches me how to read and write in the resource room.
520	Q	Do you consider that support adequate? (Probe for reasons)
521	Cd1 S1	No I want more classes in the resource room, I miss my SEN teacher and I want to study with her all the time

522	Cd2 S1	No the SEN teacher takes me only two times a week, I want to attend her classes all the week.
523	Q	What is the difference between the resource room and the regular classroom?
524	Cd1 S1	<p>The classroom is very crowded I set alone at the back but sometimes the classroom teachers ask me to come in the front. In the classroom we set in lines so sometimes I can't see the board when I want to copy anything from the board. We have a lot of lessons and a lot of exercises. The classroom teachers don't give us any gifts when we answer the questions correct. The classroom teachers also shout at us. They don't use the computer like the SEN teacher does. We don't play in the classroom we just study or be quite.</p> <p>In the resource room I enjoy a lot, the SEN teacher play with us, she prepares plays for us before the lessons I really like her plays. She has dolls and a small puppet theatre. The puppet theatre has curtains, the SEN teachers use a doll and she gave her a name 'Rabab'. I like watching this a lot. Also we help the SEN teacher to clean the resource room she ask us to arrange and tidy the books in the library. Sometimes she allows us to play some games in the computer like the word games.</p>
525	Cd2 S1	I hate the classroom it is very hot and I don't like sitting in front. I always sit at the back but my classroom teachers keep changing my position. When I sit in front I feel worried and scared because the classroom teacher watches me all the time. She says when I sit at the back I fall asleep. Also I hate the lessons we have a lot of lessons one after one. But in the resource room we don't have a lot of lessons, we play a lot we use things in the lessons like wood, clay, sand and games. I like to play puzzle to guess the words.
526	Q	How do you feel about the use of the resource room? (Probe for reasons)
527	Cd1 S1	I like going to the resource room, there is a lot of things like pictures, colours, clay and children stories. We also have dolls. The SEN teacher gave us a doll for each one of us. We put them on a table and she wrote my name on mine. When I answered a question right she gives me a poppy pin and I put it in my doll hair. If I collected five poppy pins she then gives me a gift. I like this a lot. Also we have a big board on the wall we draw anything she asks us and when we finish she tell us to stick it on the board.
528	Cd2 S1	I like the resource room there is a computer there, and we set close to the board so I see everything. Also there are a lot of gifts and the surprises box 'mystery box'. I insert my hand in that box and touch an item and then I have to guess what was that, I do that three times then if all my answers are correct, the SEN teacher gives me a gift.
529	Q	What do other children say about you because of your performance? (Probe further about how they feel about it)
530	Cd1 S1	The girls in my class make fun of me and call me lazy. I hate them. I don't have any friends. They even don't sit near to me I always sit at

		the back alone. Sometimes I cry when they call me lazy but sometimes I just ignore them and don't make friends with them. Also in the group activities they solve and do all the exercises I don't do anything because I don't understand them or sometimes they are so difficult.
531	Cd2 S1	My friends in the classroom, sometimes they help me but sometimes not, they think I am lazy or stupid. Sometimes we fight in the classroom and they call me lazy because I go with the SEN teachers. In the group activities they don't help me and ignore me but they tell me the answers sometimes.
532	Q	What is different about the SEN teacher and the regular teachers? (probe about how they relate with them)
533	Cd1 S1	I hate my literacy classroom teacher; she shouts at us sometimes, I would love to have another classroom teacher. When I do my homework she corrects it and she comments good or very good on my notebook. But when I don't do my homework she comments with a red pen 'where is the answer?' With the SEN teacher I feel like I understand everything, I like going to her lessons, she is very nice with me, she gives me gifts and chocolate when I finish my lessons and answer all her questions. She also plays with us. She does lots of things like plays, talking dolls and drawing on the sand and a lot more.
534	Cd2 S1	My classroom teacher puts a lot of pressure on me. She knows I can't read properly, but she always asks me to read in front of the students. She always calls me lazy and sleepy. She is very nervous and gets angry quickly when I can't read or write. She shouts at me a lot. I really don't like her. I like the SEN teacher; she is very nice and kind. I like going to her class because there is a computer there, and we set close to the board so I see everything. Also there are a lot of gifts and the surprises box 'mystery box'. I insert my hand in that box and touch an item and then I have to guess what that is, then if all my answers are correct, the SEN teacher gives me a gift. Also the SEN teacher talks to us and laughs with us, she doesn't scare me like the classroom teacher. When I don't understand anything I ask her she doesn't shout at me.
535	Q	Do you feel like you are treated differently because of your performance at school? (1) By teachers (2) at home (3) by other children (if yes, how?)
536	Cd1 S1	The classroom teachers and other girls call me lazy because I go to the lazy room.
537	Cd2 S1	The classroom teachers and the students in my class think I have extra lessons with SEN teacher because I am lazy.
538	Q	What is your opinion being in the same class/school with students who generally perform better than you? (probe for further information)
539	Cd1 S1	Sometimes I feel embarrassed and alone the students don't talk to me in the classroom.
540	Cd2 S1	Sometimes I feel embarrassed in the classroom when I can't read like my friends, they read better than me.

541	Q	What do you think would be the best educational provision for students who face the same challenges as yourself?
542	Cd1 S1	To change the classroom teachers and also have more time with the SEN teacher.
543	Cd2 S1	Change the classroom like the resource room and make SEN teachers teach us all the time.
544	Q	Is there any other information that I may have left out which you possibly feel may be useful to my study?
545	Cd1 S1	I want to stay with the SEN teacher until I finish my primary school.
546	Cd2 S1	I want the SEN teacher to teach us all the subjects.

Appendix 19: Data from Students in School 2

547	Q	Tell me about your family (brothers, sisters, position in the family?)
548	Cd1 S2	I have three brothers and two sisters. I am the fifth.
549	Cd2 S2	I have two brothers and one sister. I am the third
550	Q	What are your hobbies?
551	Cd1 S2	I like reading children stories but what I like more about them the pictures and the images. Also I like drawing and colouring.
552	Cd2 S2	I like drawing and serving the internet.
553	Q	What is your favourite subject?
554	Cd1 S2	Art
555	Cd2 S2	Art
556	Q	Which subjects do you find difficult? (probe for reason)
557	Cd1 S2	Reading and writing
558	Cd2 S2	Reading, writing and spelling
559	Q	Have you ever repeated classes? (if yes, how many times and reasons) - Can you tell me how you feel as result of repeating classes?
560	Cd1 S2	No
561	Cd2 S2	No
562	Q	How do you generally feel about school? (Probe for reason)
563	Cd1 S2	I like the school but I hate the reading and writing classes. Sometimes I feel like I don't want to come to school, my math classroom teacher scares me and sometimes shouts at us. Also when I remember we have reading, and writing classes I feel not happy because I don't like to read.
564	Cd2 S2	I like the school but I don't like the reading and writing classes.
565	Q	How do your parents support you perform better at school? (Do you consider that support adequate?)
566	Cd1 S2	My mom helps me and revises with me at home sometimes my older sister.
567	Cd2 S2	My parents help me and teach me at home. I find difficulties in reading some words, my mom teaches me how to read them and I repeat them until I recite them.
568	Q	What kind of learning materials are there at home (Books, magazines, computer, table, internet)
569	Cd1 S2	We have a big library in our home. The library contains different kind of books but we don't read them, only my dad reads them, but me and my brothers and sisters we don't read from books that much, we read from phones, laptops, and newspaper, and my parents ask us to read the holey Quran every Friday.
570	Cd2 S2	I have iPad, my dad has a laptop and also we have books. My dad bought me a pen. The pen helps me with my reading when I put the pen on any words the pen reads the word for me. I use that pen to practice holy Quran with my little sister. My mom told me if we keep

		reading Quran we will go to heaven.
571	Q	Have you been assessed to determine why you don't perform well at school? (If yes – what were you told the problem was?)
572	Cd1 S2	Yes the SEN teacher gave me a test in reading, writing and spelling. She told me that I have to answer the questions I know and leave the difficult ones. She told me also she will help me with my reading and writing because I can't read properly. I spell the letters like small children but I cant write or read them correctly.
573	Cd2 S2	Yes, the SEN teacher gave me reading and writing exam. She told me because I have difficulties to read or write I have to do this exam so she can help me to do better.
574	Q	Do you consider yourself as having a disability as result of how you perform at school? (Probe for reasons)
575	Cd1 S2	No but the students in the class say that I have a learning disability I don't know what is that but they think I am lazy or stupid.
576	Cd2 S2	No but my friend in the class call me lazy
577	Q	What kind of support are you given at school to improve in the subjects you don't perform well?
578	Cd1 S2	The SEN teacher teaches me two classes a week in the resource room. She supports me with my reading and writing.
579	Cd2 S2	My SEN teacher teaches me how to read and write, she takes me to her room twice a week
580	Q	Do you consider that support adequate? (Probe for reasons)
581	Cd1 S2	No I need more classes wit my SEN teacher
582	Cd2 S2	No I want to study in the resource room more
583	Q	What is the difference between the resource room and the regular classroom?
584	Cd1 S2	The classroom is very hot I hate it. Also the students are annoying me and sometimes I can't see the board properly. Also in classroom we do a lot of exercises and we have a lot of lessons. But in the resource room we don't have a lot of lessons; also the air conditioner in the recourse room is cold and nice. In the recourse room we have corner to study, corner for the computer, corner for plying with sand or colour and corner for the library. In the classroom we have only small library but we don't read the sorties because we just study. Also we sit in round tables not desks like the classrooms.
585	Cd2 S2	In the classroom we study all the subjects, the classroom teachers don't allow us to play or do anything. But in the resource room the SEN teacher gives us lessons in reading and writing only. Also I go alone or sometimes I have two or three students with me in the resource room. Also in the classroom we don't have a library or computer like the resource room. We don't play with colours or sand in the classroom like we do in the recourse room. I like the corners in the resource room; in the resource room there is no desks. We have round tables in each corner. In the classroom I have to sit beside my classmates, two students are next to me we sit in lines. Sometimes I can't see the board.

586	Q	How do you feel about the use of the resource room? (Probe for reasons)
587	Cd1 S2	I like it more than the classroom. I feel happy when I go there also I feel relax I listen carefully to my SEN teacher. The resource room is very nice place; I like the wall paint and the decoration. I like the games.
588	Cd2 S2	I feel very happy; I like the resource room a lot. But in the resource room we play and study at the same time. The SEN teacher allows us to use the computer and also sits with us on the floor we read stories together and play with puzzles
589	Q	What do other children say about you because of your performance? (Probe further about how they feel about it)
590	Cd1 S2	Sometimes I fight with the girls in my classroom. They call me lazy because I go to the resource room.
591	Cd2 S2	Sometime the girls in my classroom don't help me when the classroom teacher asks us to do any exercise with group activity. They think I can't do it so they don't help me.
592	Q	What is different about the SEN teacher and the regular teachers? (probe about how they relate with them)
593	Cd1 S2	I don't like all my classroom teachers. I only like my literacy classroom teacher. But I like my SEN teacher more. My classroom teacher gives us a lot of homework and don't play with us. They just ask us to study. But the SEN teacher allows us to do things we like. The SEN teacher is very nice; she gives us a lot of gifts when we answer the questions correct.
594	Cd2 S2	I like my SEN teacher because she gives me a lot of gifts. Also she play with me the money game she bring money but not real it's paper and she put some real money between them I have to count and find the real money then if I found like five riyals she gives me that and asks me to buy anything from the school canteen or just keep it with me. The classroom teachers don't do that with us. They just teach us and shout to us or sometimes don't allow us to talk in the classroom when we have spare time.
595	Q	Do you feel like you are treated differently because of your performance at school? (1) By teachers (2) at home (3) by other children (if yes, how?)
596	Cd1 S2	My literacy classroom teacher always puts me with a group to work together and also asks the students to help me. But the students in my classroom sometimes annoy me because they say I am stupid and lazy and that is why I go to the resource room.
597	Cd2 S2	My classroom teacher asks me to read and write like the other students in the classroom. My friends call me lazy sometimes.
598	Q	What is your opinion being in the same class/school with students who generally perform better than you? (probe for further information)
599	Cd1 S2	I feel embarrassed because I read like small children I hate to read in front of them. I sometimes try to hide myself during the reading

		session because I don't want my classroom teacher pick me and ask me to read loud.
600	Cd2 S2	Sometimes I feel sad when my friends refuse to help me or even don't allow me to work with them in the group activities. I feel embarrassed when the classroom teacher asks me a question I cannot give the correct answer.
601	Q	What do you think would be the best educational provision for students who face the same challenges as yourself?
602	Cd1 S2	To attend more classes with the SEN teacher
603	Cd2 S2	Spend more time in the resource room
604	Q	Is there any other information that I may have left out which you possibly feel may be useful to my study?
605	Cd1 S2	I want more lessons in the resource room
606	Cd2 S2	I want my classroom looks like the resource room

Appendix 20: Resource Room Field Notes

Appendix 20.1: Cd1, School 1

Time: 11:30 am

Date: 20/ 09/ 2013

Literacy support lesson – Vowels

I attended a literacy support lesson in the resource room with Cd1. During the lesson, I saw the SEN teacher used plays and tools that drew Cd1's attention. One of the tools was that, the SEN teacher used dolls and a small puppet theatre, which she created herself with very simple tools. The puppet theatre had curtains. The SEN teacher used a doll, and she gave her the name 'Rabab'. The SEN teacher told Cd1 that today we have Rabab with us to help us in our lesson. Cd1 was very happy and started to prepare her for the play. She sat down quietly and put her hands on top of each other on the table, and then she put her head on top of her hands waiting for the play to start. The SEN teacher started the play; she sat down at the back of the theatre and started to talk as if she was Rabab, then she opened the curtains and welcomed Cd1. Cd1 was smiling when she saw Rabab. Rabab started to talk about herself and what she was doing. Then she started to tell a story about a vowel letter called 'alef'. Cd1 was listening carefully when Rabab was telling the story. When Rabab finished the story, she asked Cd1 some questions. Cd1 answered her back correctly, then Rabab gave Cd1 a little test about the vowel 'alef', using words with missing letters. Cd1 had to find out which letter was missing. She answered most of the words correctly; almost six out of ten were correct. Then Rabab finished her play and said goodbye to Cd1. Cd1 smiled again and said goodbye and released her hands as well when she said goodbye.

This example showed how much Cd1 was focused in the resource room and how much she was happy. The SEN Teacher was using approaches to draw the students' attention and also make her to focus. The SEN Teacher used stories as a strategy in order to help Cd1 remembering, and also to grab her attention.

During my observation of Cd1 in her classroom and in the resource room I noticed the difference in Cd1's attention. In the resource room she was very focused, the SEN teacher used strategies that were different from the classroom teacher's strategies. Cd1 seemed a completely different student in the resource room. I noticed that in her eyes, and even some of her reactions showed that her attention was focused.

Note: The SEN Teacher used the formal Arabic language in all her lessons and while talking to the students during the lessons

Time: 12:00 p.m.

Date: 25/ 09/ 2013

Literacy support lesson – Spelling

The SEN teacher started her lesson by a game. There was a box; inside that box there were some items. The SEN teacher asked Cd1 and Cd2 to closed their eyes and take one item from that box. While the students were closing their eyes they had to recognize what they picked from the box by touching it. If they got it right then they opened their eyes and wrote the name of that item down. Each student picked three items; both students recognized what they picked before they opened their eyes. But they couldn't write it correctly. Cd1 had a problem in her spelling. She didn't spell the words correctly. She wasn't able to find the difference between the two kinds of 'al' in Arabic, which means 'the' in English.

The SEN Teacher asked Cd1 to go to the board and write the words she said. Cd1 started to write them. She wrote three words, but she wrote all them wrong. Then the SEN teacher asked Cd2 to go and write the same three words on the board. When she finished, she asked Cd1 and Cd2 to compare their answers and think if there were any mistakes. Cd1 tried to identify her mistakes. After three minutes, the SEN teacher came to the board and showed both students their mistakes and wrote the words again. She pointed out the letters they didn't write.

After that the SEN teacher took them to the computer and opened a story. She started to read the story, and she stopped at some words and asked Cd1 and Cd2 to read those words. She let them spell it first then say the word. Cd1 couldn't say any word correctly. The SEN Teacher said the words and asked Cd1 and Cd2 to repeat

after her. She then took the students to the table again and started to test them in those words. The SEN Teacher said the words and the students wrote them in their notebook. Then she asked them to show me their writing. I encouraged them to carry on. Then I joined them in a game. It was a letter game. There were some letters on the table. The students should choose the right letters for the word I said, and they should rearrange the letter and build the word correctly. I gave them four words starting with 'al': two words with 'al alshamsiah', and two words with 'al alqamariha'. Cd1 didn't get the words starting with 'al alshamsiah' right. Every time she skipped the letter L, because she didn't pronounce it that way, she thought she didn't have to write it as well. Because she got two answers correctly, the SEN teacher rewarded her and gave her a gift, but she asked her to study the words she learnt in that day.

Note 1: in Arabic language we have two kinds of 'al' which means 'the' in English. The first one is 'al' 'alshamsiah': in this the letter 'L' is not pronounced, it is silent when it is connected with any words. For example the word 'alshams' means 'the sun': the letter L in this word is written but not pronounced. The second one is 'al' 'alqamariha': in this the letter 'L' must be pronounced when it is connected with any words. For example 'alqamar' means 'the moon': the letter L is written and pronounced.

Note 2: The SEN Teacher used the formal Arabic language in all her lessons and while talking to the students during the lessons.

Appendix: 20.3: Cd1 and Cd2, School 1 (small group)

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Date: 03/ 10/ 2013

Literacy support lesson – Vowel

The lesson was how to use the vowel ‘dammah’ with some words. The SEN teacher started her lesson with a game. She gave the students clay and asked them to make the vowel ‘dammah’ shape then she asked them to pronounce it while they were working. Then the SEN teacher drew the ‘dammah’ shape on the board and asked the students to pronounce it loudly. After that, she wrote some words on the board and asked Cd1 and Cd2 to come to the board and put the dammah on the right letter with a different colour. She then wrote the same letters, but without dammah, and pronounced the words with and without dammah. Then she asked the students to find the difference between the word with dammah and without dammah. Next the SEN teacher took them to the letters signboard and asked them to read some letters with damma. Cd1 pronounced some of them correctly but sometimes she just couldn’t get them right; Cd2 pronounced most of the words correctly.

The SEN teacher then showed them some pictures with words on them. She asked the students to write the words on the board and use dammah on it. The student who got more words correctly would put a clip on her doll. Cd1 did only two out of five words correctly, but Cd2 did four out of five, so Cd2 won and she put a clip on her doll.

Note: each SpLD student has a doll in the resource room. The SEN teacher uses this reward strategy to encourage the students to learn: She puts a poppy pin or a clip on the doll's hair every time a student answers her test correctly; if the student has collected five clips then she would be rewarded.

Appendix: 20.4: Cd1 and Cd2, School 1 (small group)

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Date: 10/10/ 2013

Some issues during my observation in the resource room

During my observation in the resource room I noticed some issues which happened during the lessons. Because I kept observing and writing down everything, I personally thought these issues might disrupt the students' learning during their lessons. I am not judging the teachers, and I am not in the position to judge what was going there during my attendance, but I thought it worth mentioning them here.

The SEN Teacher kept her mobile phone on during the lessons. The phone was ringing and made such a noise. She didn't close it down or even put it on silent mode. I felt a bit annoyed as it was really disrupting my attention. So I thought it was disrupting the students' attention as well.

There were some other students who came in to see the SEN teacher, and stopped her lesson for minutes just to ask her about something. Or they needed something from her, or a classroom teacher sent them to ask the SEN teacher about another thing. The SEN Teacher cut off her lesson more than once during her lessons, and Cd1 and Cd2 had to wait till she finished and came back to them again.

There were even some classroom teachers who cut off the SEN teacher's lessons and talked to her during them, or just asked her about things related to personal matters which could be asked after the lesson.

Appendix 21: Classroom Field Notes

Appendix 21.1: Cd1, School 1

Period: 45 minutes

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Date: 03 / 09/ 2013

Writing and spelling lesson

The regular teacher entered the classroom. She greeted the students and the students greeted her back. She asked them 'How are you today?' They replied 'We are fine'. I was sitting with Cd1's group and I told them today I would help them with some exercises.

The classroom teacher had some handouts. She spread them around the tables. Each student had one. She asked them not to start to do anything until she told them what they should do.

She drew a table on the board and divided it into columns and rows. She wrote some letters in first column. Then she wrote three words in front of each letter, but she didn't write the full letters of each word. She skipped the letter she wrote in the first column. She wrote three words which have that letter in the beginning, in the middle, and at the end. She started to explain to the students the three different ways of writing those letters when they come in different places in the words.

When she finished after fifteen minutes, she moved to the handouts and asked the students to do the same.

She sat on her desk while the students were doing their exercise. I worked with some of the students in Cd's group and I helped them. I worked with Cd1 but I wasn't allowed to correct her mistakes, because the students would be assessed after this exercise. Cd1 found this exercise very difficult. Sometimes she wrote some words correctly, but sometimes not –especially some letters, which she couldn't write correctly when they came at the end of the words. In her IEP the SEN teacher was working to improve Cd's writing, specifically on those letters, but Cd1 still had some difficulties when she was in the classroom.

The students took about fifteen minutes. After that, the teacher asked them to hand in their handouts. She asked the students to sit down in their places quietly while she was correcting their papers. There was fifteen minutes left of the lesson; the teacher didn't do anything, and the students were talking, playing and whispering to each other. When the bell rang, she took the handouts and went to her office. I then followed her and asked if I could look at Cd1's paper, and take a picture after she had corrected it. She said "OK". The copy of her test is in Appendix 12. Cd1 had zero in that test; all her answers were wrong.

During the lessons I noticed that Cd1 was not moving or talking or playing in the classroom but she was in 'a different world' as her classroom teacher described her. She was yawning a lot and not very focused on the lesson, and whenever the classroom teacher asked her to answer any questions, she could not answer. I noticed that she was not looking at the teacher when the teacher was explaining the lesson. Also, she was not copying from the board, and when she tried she did not complete it. In group activities, when the classroom teacher asked her friends to

help her, her friend gave her the answers or sometimes wrote the answers for her without explaining them to her. She was used to that way, and she relied on her friends a lot. She could not complete a task on her own.

The classroom teacher called her 'lazy' in front of her classmates, due to her difficulties in reading and writing. Also the students in her class were not very helpful and they actually avoided talking to her or making friends, with her just because they thought that Cd1 was 'lazy'.

I noticed that in all her lessons that I attended, Cd1 sat at the back, but the teacher kept asking her to change her position and come to the front, close to an excellent student, according to the classroom teacher. She thought by doing that the excellent students would help Cd1, but Cd1 ended up by copying her answers from the excellent students. Some students in her classroom were even so selfish that they did not give her a hand, and they called her 'lazy' most of the time. It happened in front of me and I noticed Cd1 crying when she heard them.

I was very upset about that and wanted to do something, but my role was only to notice and write down what was going on. But also I reported that behaviour to the Head Teacher, the classroom teacher and to the SEN teacher and asked them to do something about this.

Note: The classroom teacher used informal Arabic.

Appendix 21.2: Cd1, School 1

Period: 45 minutes

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Date: 05/ 09/ 2013

Reading session: Holy Quran lesson

I was sitting close to Cd's group but I didn't join them because I didn't want to let the students feel I was observing them, since I told them I would just sit and listen to the teacher.

The classroom teacher walked into her classroom. She greeted the students and the students greeted her back. She sat on her desk and asked the students to calm down and keep quiet. She told them a bit about the new lesson but before that she did a little reading test with some students.

The students started to prepare themselves for a Quran lesson. Cd1 took her Quran out from her bag. Each student had her Quran with her.

The teacher started to revise the previous lesson with them. She asked some students to read some verses from 'Surat al insan' read them by heart. She nominated some students, picking them according to her reading schedule. Cd1 was on that schedule that day. When the teacher called her name, she said "Miss I didn't study it at home." The teacher shouted at her and said "Next time if you haven't studied I will give you zero in Quran." She picked ten students, then she stopped and started her new lesson.

The teacher told the students to open at page 577, 'Surat Al-Qiyāmah', and started reading it. She asked them to read silently while she was looking at her notes. After ten minutes she asked them to stop reading, and listen to her and follow her reading

and repeat after her. The students were repeating loudly; I was trying to hear Cd1's voice. She sometimes repeated some words correctly but sometimes she just moved her lips without saying the words. The teacher was reading so fast that some of the students couldn't catch her. When the teacher finished she said "OK now, who will read?". Some students raised their hands, but Cd1 didn't. The teacher started to pick some students to read verse by verse. Then she asked Cd1 if she could read one verse. Cd1 moved her head up and down which means 'OK'. She tried to read but she couldn't read any word correctly. She was jumping and missing some words, and whenever she did, the teacher held her finger and asked her to put her finger on the page and follow her finger while she was reading. Cd1 again did jump two verses. The teacher came close to her and said to Cd1: "How many times have I told you to follow your finger while you read! Why can't you see the verses?" Then the teacher asked her to stop.

The teacher started to explain the meaning of some words and she wrote them on the board. She then asked the students to learn some verses by heart when they went home because she would test them next week.

Note 1: While the lesson carried on, another teacher just opened the door and starting asking the classroom teacher who was in class teaching loudly about things which were not related to the lesson. . When she saw me sitting with the students, she said to the classroom teacher, loudly: "Oh, you have the LD researcher in your classroom? Poor you – you have LD students in your class this year! Thank God I don't have any LD students this year, otherwise I'd be crazy!"

Note 2: The teacher did not use the formal Arabic language while teaching. She kept talking to the students using informal language even during the lessons.

Appendix 21.3: Cd2, School 1

Period: 45 minutes

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Date: 07/ 09/ 2013

Literacy session: Reading and writing exercises

The classroom teacher entered the class and greeted the students. She asked them straight away to prepare themselves for the lesson while she opened the laptop and the projector.

When she finished, she first revised the last lesson with the students. She asked them some questions and some students volunteered to answer them. After that she started to introduce the new lesson by also asking some questions.

Cd2 was sitting at the back, and she was not very focused. During my observation I noticed that Cd2 couldn't understand the classroom teacher's questions. The classroom teacher asked her, "When you wake up in the morning, what is the first thing you do?" Cd2 looked very nervous and was thinking, and took some time to reply. The classroom teacher repeated the question again but Cd2 did not answer. The classroom teacher shouted and repeated the question for the third time, then Cd2 answered, "I go to the farm with my dad", in a low voice. The classroom teacher said to her, "I did not ask you what you do at the weekend!"

Cd2 did not understand the classroom teacher's question, and also she was not focused on the lesson otherwise she would have answered, "When I wake up in the morning I come to the school," because the lesson was related to things to do in the morning.

I noticed that Cd2 was sleepy; her eyes were closing and yawning most of the time. Her classroom teacher always was complaining that Cd2 sleeps during the lessons.

The classroom teacher kept asking Cd2 questions from time to time. She asked her seven times during this lesson. It was noticeable that the classroom teacher put pressure on Cd2 by asking her so many questions.

Cd2 felt uncomfortable and stressed, and never answered any question right. Her friends were sometimes whispering the answers to her, and whenever Cd2 got the chance to hear the answer, she just said it straight away. The classroom teacher shouted at her in front of her classmates and sometimes she told her “You are like the chair you sit on”, which means you don’t understand anything, just like the chair.

I wondered why the classroom teacher kept asking only Cd2 so many questions and why she showed such attitudes toward Cd2.

When the lesson finished, I followed the classroom teacher to her office and asked her why she did ask Cd2 so many questions and why she did she described her like that in front of the classrooms. She replied “it is because the student keeps falling asleep during lessons so when I ask her questions from time to time she would not sleep, that would keep her awake” Also she thought she was not very harsh with Cd2, but that she tried to help her to improve her learning.

It was obvious that Cd2 was not focused on her lessons due to her fears about her classroom teacher. The classroom teacher put Cd2 under pressure by asking her a lot of questions. Also it was noticeable that Cd2 was struggling with organising herself, as, though she always was asked to bring her books, files and her pencil

case with her, she always misplaced them or forgot them at home. Her bag was not very tidy, either, and she had to take some time to find her stuff. She forgot to do her homework many times and she was punished by her classroom teacher, by having to repeat the homework twice, or even up to five times. Her handwriting was not very clear, and her notebook was a bit messy (see Appendix12). Also it was noticed that Cd2 skipped her classroom lessons five times during my attendance, so that I was not able to follow her enough in the classroom. But what drew my attention was that Cd2 never missed her lessons with the SEN teacher in the resource room. Every time I had an observation of her in the resource room, she was always there. Cd2 was only skipping her literacy classes her classroom teacher because of the pressure she gets from her. The classroom teacher's behaviour with Cd2 was one of the reasons that made Cd2 skip the lessons, as Cd2 stated during her interview. She also declared that she liked her SEN teacher because she always offered her gifts in the resource room.

Note: The teacher sometimes used the Formal Arabic language while teaching but sometimes she changed to the informal when she talked to the students in general.

Appendix 21.4: Cd1, School 2

Period: 45 minutes

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Date: 13/ 10/ 2013

Literacy session: writing

The classroom teacher entered the classroom and greeted the students. She asked them about the homework. The students showed their homework to the classroom teacher but Cd1 had forgotten to do it. The classroom teacher asked her to bring it in the next day and did not say anything to her.

The classroom teacher then opened the laptop and the projector; she showed the lesson on the board. There was an exercise on the board, sentences with missing words. The teacher read the sentence aloud, and then stopped by the missing words and asked the students to guess them. Whenever a student said the correct word, the teacher asked her to go and write it in the empty place.

She asked Cd1 to guess one word, and Cd1 had the correct answer – but when she wrote it on the board she couldn't spell it right. The teacher then asked another student to go and correct the word. When she finished with this, she told the students to take their positions in their groups, and gave each group handout. There were five groups and each group had a name.

The class were divided into three sections and the students had to sit in lines, with three students in each. So the front line would be a group with a line behind them, and so on. Cd2 was sitting at the back as her regular position but the classroom teacher kept asking her to come in front.

The groups started to write and finish their work and the classroom teacher said to them that the first group that finished their work and got it correct, she would put their name on the rewarding board in the classroom. The students started to work, but Cd1 was very quiet. The students in her group did not speak to her. They did the whole piece of work, then they handed it to the teacher.

All the students in Cd1's group had full marks, even Cd1. They won the competition and the teacher put their group's name on the rewarding board.

After that she asked the students to get back to their places and open their writing books, she then gave them some words and asked them to write them down. The teacher came close to Cd1 and asked her to open her text book too, and told her if she couldn't spell a word, she might draw a circle around it in the text.

Cd1 tried to spell some words, but she could not spell most of them (see Appendix 12). I noticed that Cd1 was moving and talking to her friends a lot. She was also playing with her hair and her pens. The classroom teacher sometimes noticed her movement and asked her to sit down and focus on the lesson.

When the teacher finished her writing test, she asked the students to read a bit from their text books. She started with Cd1. Cd1 was not able to read a full sentence, as she was trying hard to spell some words letter by letter, then trying to say the word. Sometimes the teacher helped her, and sometimes asked other students to say the word, then Cd1 repeated it after them. I noticed Cd1 felt embarrassed when she was asked to read in front of her classmates. Even though her classroom teacher was very supportive, Cd1 felt embarrassed because she was spelling the words. Also her

voice was so low that I could not hear her while she was reading. The classroom teacher came very close to her in order to hear her voice.

Note: The teacher used the formal Arabic language during teaching and when she talked to the students as stated in the education policy.

Appendix 21.5: Cd2, School 2

Period: 45 minutes

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Date: 25/ 10/ 2013

Literacy session: Reading

The classroom teacher came in. I was sitting close to Cd2, but I made sure that my position in the class was not exactly next to Cd2, so the students in the class wouldn't know that I was observing her. I did that with the other students too. The classroom teacher opened the laptop and the projector, and the lesson was shown on the board, but at the same time the teacher asked the students to open their books and follow the same page. She then asked the students to focus as she was about to turn on the audio so they would hear the text. When she played the sound, a child's voice came out reading the text on the board. The students listened; some of them kept listening and looking at the board as they tried to follow the text, some listened and looked at their books but Cd1 was only listening, she did not look either at the board or at her book. When the audio finished, the classroom teacher asked them to stay as they were so she would play the audio for the second time, but this time both the text and images of the story appeared on the board. I noticed that Cd2 looked at the board straight away when she saw some images and started to listen carefully. She kept looking at the board until the audio stopped.

The teacher again asked the students not to make any move as she would play the audio for the last time. This time there were only images on the board without text. The students looked at the board and listened to the story, including Cd2.

After that the teacher asked the students to open their books and start to read the same story for three minutes. Cd2 started to move and did not open the right page.

She did not read and just kept talking to her friends. Also, when she saw the teacher sitting down on her chair, she started to play with some white gloves she had brought them from home. She wore them during the lesson and started to scare her friend who was sitting next to her. The classroom teacher did not notice her at the beginning as Cd2 tried to hide the gloves when the classroom teacher was moving around.

After three minutes, the teacher asked the students to stop, and asked some of them to read aloud. Then she noticed that Cd2 was not concentrating, and she asked her to read. But Cd2 had not opened the right page, and could not find the page number. She took some time to find it, with help from her friends. Then she started to read but in a very low voice. The teacher asked her to read very loud, and when she tried she could not read the words correctly.

Note: The teacher used formal Arabic language when she was teaching but she used informal when she talked to the students.

Appendix 21.6: My own field notes of the four students

Time: 9:00 p.m.

Date: 20/ 11/ 2013

The four students from both schools were very similar, in that they were reading in low voices. It was obvious that they were very scared and embarrassed by reading very loud. They lacked confidence, and felt their reading was different from the rest of the students. Also I noticed that Cd2 from School 1 and Cd2 from School 2 were trying to avoid their classroom teacher picking them to read. They tried to look down and never had eye contact with their classroom teacher in reading sessions. In reading sessions, the four students did not volunteer to read, but some classroom teachers, like Cd2's teacher from School 1 and Cd2's teacher from School 2 would ask these students to read loudly. The SpLD students had a different assessment in reading, and classroom teachers should have known that, but some of them seemed like they did not follow the policy and mistreated the students. Their low voices when reading indicated that SpLD students did not have enough confidence, and always had fears of reading in front of others. They also were worried about what others would think or say about them if they heard their reading.

SEN teachers also confirmed that SpLD students were feeling very shy and embarrassed when they read. In general, it was also noticeable that the students were not given extra time in the classrooms in order to recall what the SEN teachers had taught them. The students need support, and creative teaching methods in order to improve their reading level and not to feel embarrassed. The SEN teachers in both schools were aware of that, and tried their best to help the students overcome their embarrassment in reading, while some classroom teachers did not make any

effort to help the students. Some of them even did not take their difficulties into consideration and kept dealing with them like with other students who had no reading problems.

Another thing that can influence the self-esteem of the students with SpLD is the way that they might be treated by their classroom teachers. I have observed the four students in their classroom teachers and noticed that classroom teachers in School 1 treated Cd1 and Cd2 differently. Cd2's classroom teacher always shouted at her, and told her that she would fail if she did not make any progress. Also she described her as '*the chair*' because she did not engage with her, and did not make any effort to answer her questions.

Cd1's classroom teacher always complained that Cd1 should be taught in a separate classroom with other SpLD students for the whole school day. She was in favour of isolation, and she said this in front of other students. Other classroom teachers agreed with her and thought the isolation of SpLD students was the best solution for them.

On the other hand, not all classroom teachers mistreated or ignored their SpLD students. There was a good example in School 2. Cd1's classroom teacher was trying her best to support the students with SpLD, and that had a positive effect on the students' self-esteem.

The classroom teacher in School 2 had completely different opinions. Cd1's classroom teacher always behaved to her as she did towards the other students. She encouraged her during the lessons, and sometimes rewarded her. Cd1's classroom

teacher was the best role model for a classroom teacher in her dealing with the students in general, and SpLD students in particular.

Also I noticed that in both schools the students with SpLD were not given extra time in the classrooms to in order to recall what the SEN teachers had taught them in the resource room.

Appendix 21.7: Teachers' awareness (data from my field notes)

Time: 5:00 p.m.

Date: 25/ 11/ 2013

In School 1 it was obvious that the teachers did not have enough knowledge regarding SpLD. The SEN teacher did not periodically organize workshops or events. The last event concerning SpLD taking place in school 1 was more than two years before. The SEN teacher stated that whenever she organizes workshops or tries to announce any workshop to take place in the school, the classroom teachers do not attend. She also stated that the classroom teachers did not read her material. She sends them information on SpLD regularly, but they always complain about dealing with students with SpLD, and about how to teach them and how to assess them.

In School 2, classroom teachers were a little bit different, as they thought those students were vulnerable and needed a lot of care. They talked a lot with the SEN teacher, as I noticed during their breakfast. The classroom teachers asked the SEN teachers about methods of teaching SpLD students. Although they did not have enough knowledge of SpLD, they were in a better position compared to classroom teachers in School 1. The SEN teacher in School 2 was very active, and tried to raise awareness about every event that takes place in the school. I noticed her efforts, such as when she wrote phrases about SpLD on the school's walls(see Appendix12). Further, she had organized a conference on SpLd in the school in the semester before. She prepared a programme, and trainee teachers helped her. I saw her work in a file, and was really impressed by it. This SEN teacher was very imaginative, with many ideas, but her problem was that during meetings with

mothers she did not use very simple language to explain what SpLD meant. As she said herself in her interview, she had been promised a better job in the MOE, so she had to work very hard to improve her level of experience.

In addition, during my resource room observation I noticed that she wanted me to attend some lessons with her but not all. When I asked her why, she said “Just ask for my permission before you attend any lesson”. I was very surprised, but at the same time I thought that since she was an excellent SEN teacher she would not refuse. Later I realized she was not always prepared for her lessons, and she did not want anybody to see her weaknesses in teaching. She was always making sure that everything in her lessons was perfect, but because I stayed with her a whole term I discovered that she just tried to appear perfect if someone important attended her lessons, like the Head Teacher, or SEN supervisors or visitors.

Appendix 22: School Timetables

Appendix 22.1: An example of classroom timetable

المملكة العربية السعودية
إدارة التربية والتعليم

اسم رائدة الفصل :
الصف : ثالث / ١

الأيام	الحصة الأولى	الحصة الثانية	الحصة الثالثة	الحصة الرابعة	الحصة الخامسة	الحصة السادسة	الحصة السابعة
الأحد	قرآن	رياضيات	لغتي	لغتي	توحيد	علوم	قرآن
الاثنين	رياضيات	لغتي	لغتي	تربية أسرية	قرآن	نشاط	نشاط
الثلاثاء	قرآن	رياضيات	لغتي	تربية أسرية	تربية أسرية	فقه	نشاط فصلي
الأربعاء	رياضيات	قرآن	تربية فنية	تربية فنية	لغتي	لغتي	نشاط فصلي
الخميس	لغتي	رياضيات	لغتي	قرآن	علوم	قرآن	نشاط فصلي

إعداد الوكيل /
مديرة المدرسة /

The timetable shows the subjects that are taught to Cd1 in the third grade in School 1. The days and the periods of the lessons are shown in the table too. The table in the next page is a translation of the timetable shown above.

Period Days	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Sixth	Seventh
Sunday	Science	Maths	Arabic	Arabic	Islamic	Maths	Quran
Monday	Arabic	Arabic	Maths	Family education	Quran	Class activities	
Tuesday	Quran	Maths	Arabic	Family education		Islamic	Class activities
Wednesday	Arabic	Quran	Art	Art	Maths	Arabic	Class activities
Thursday	Arabic	Science	Arabic	Quran	Maths	Quran	Class activities

A translation of the classroom timetable for Cd1: School 1

Appendix 22.2: An example of resource room timetable

الجمهورية العربية السورية
وزارة التربية والتعليم
وزارة التربية والتعليم
Ministry of Education

(نموذج ٦/م)

رقم التلميذة بالبرنامج

برنامج صعوبات التعلم لعام ١٤٣٣ - ١٤٣٤ هـ

دفتر تحضير الخطة التربوية الفردية

اسم التلميذة: . العمر: ٩ سنوات المادة: املاء رقمها: () الصف: ٣/د المدرسة: ب. /

اليوم / الحصة	الأولى	الثانية	الثالثة	الرابعة	الخامسة	اسم معلمة المادة	التوقيع
المببت							
الأحد							
الاثنين							
الثلاثاء							
الأربعاء							

المستوى الفعلي للتلميذة بناءً على الاختبارات الأكاديمية

الأول الثاني الثالث الرابع الخامس السادس أخرى

معلمة الصف :

مديرة المدرسة:

The table above shows Cd1 spelling timetable in the resource room, below is a translation of this timetable.

Support programme for students with SpLD 2013/2014

Individual Educational Plan (**Resource room Timetable**)

Student's Name: Cd1

Age: 9 years-old

Subject: Arabic/ Spelling

Student's ID: (---)

Grade: Third

School: School 1

Period Days	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Teacher's name	Signature
Sunday			Spelling				
Monday					Spelling		
Tuesday							
Wednesday							
Thursday							

The actual level of the student based on academic tests	First grade	Second grade	Third grade	Fourth grade	Fifth grade	Sixth grade
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Classroom Teacher

Head Teacher

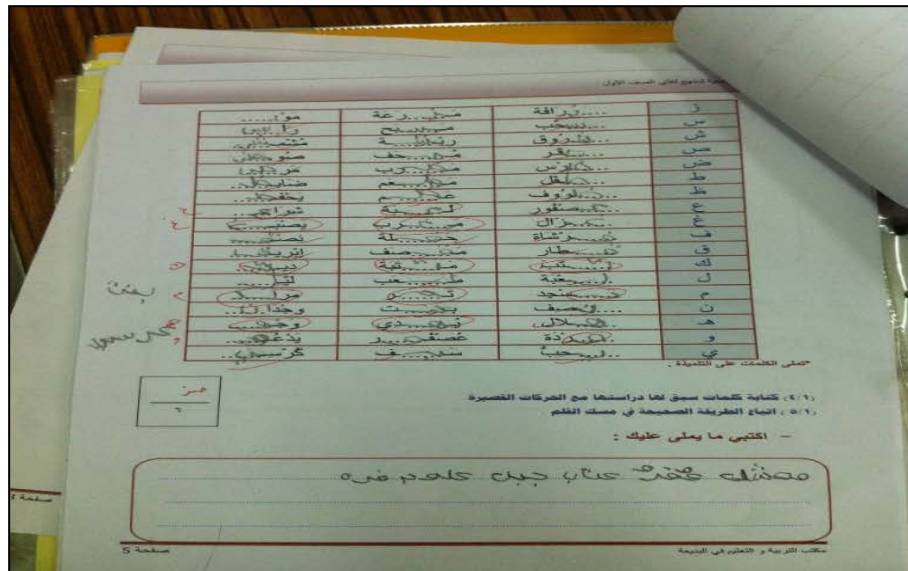
Signature

Signature

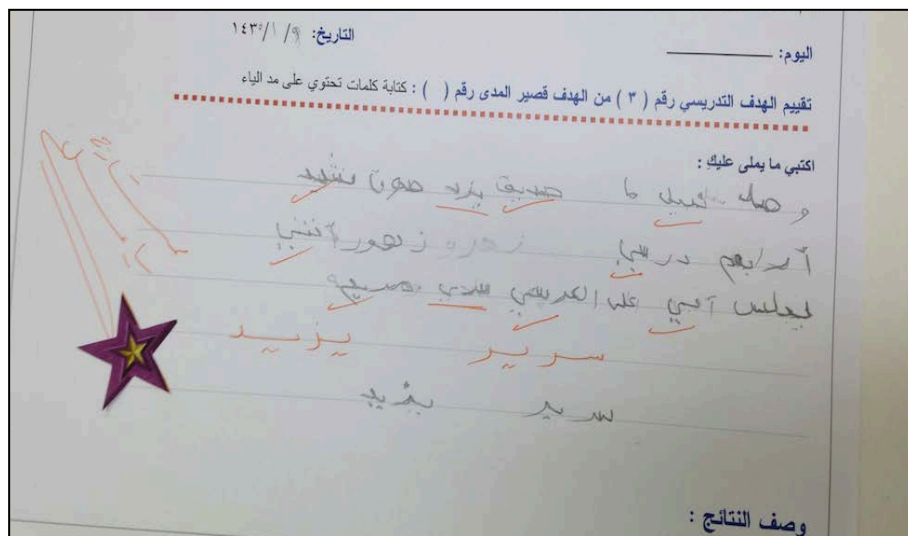
A translation of Cd1 spelling timetable in the resource room: School 1

Appendix 23: Photos

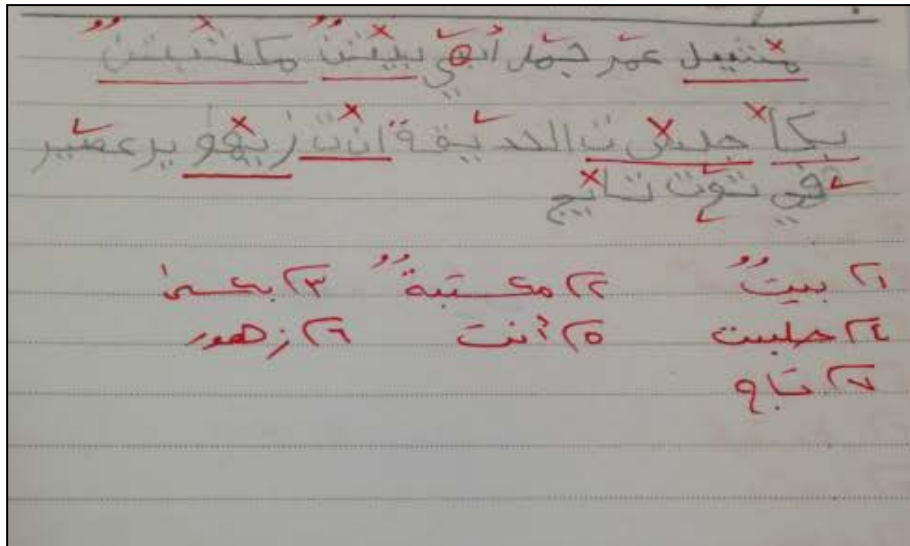
Appendix 23.1: Students' spelling tests



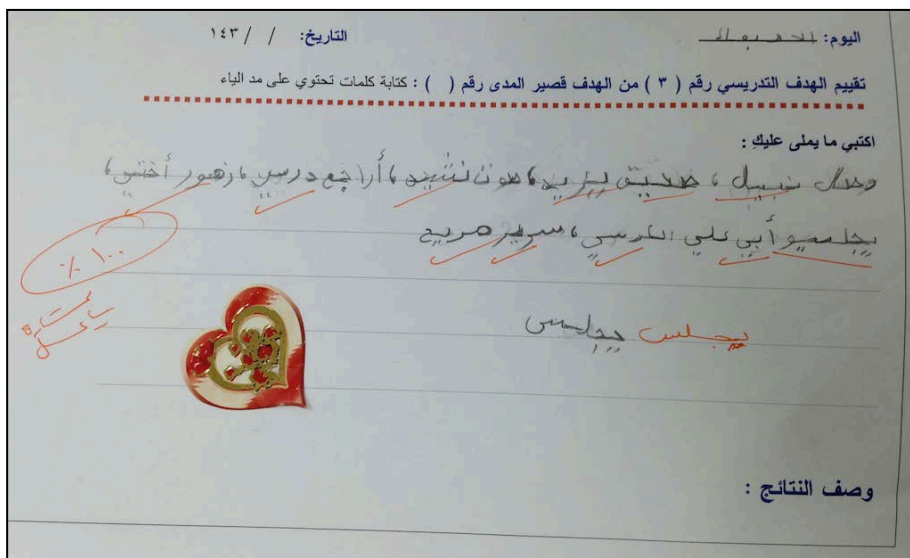
Cd1, School 1: literacy assessment in the classroom



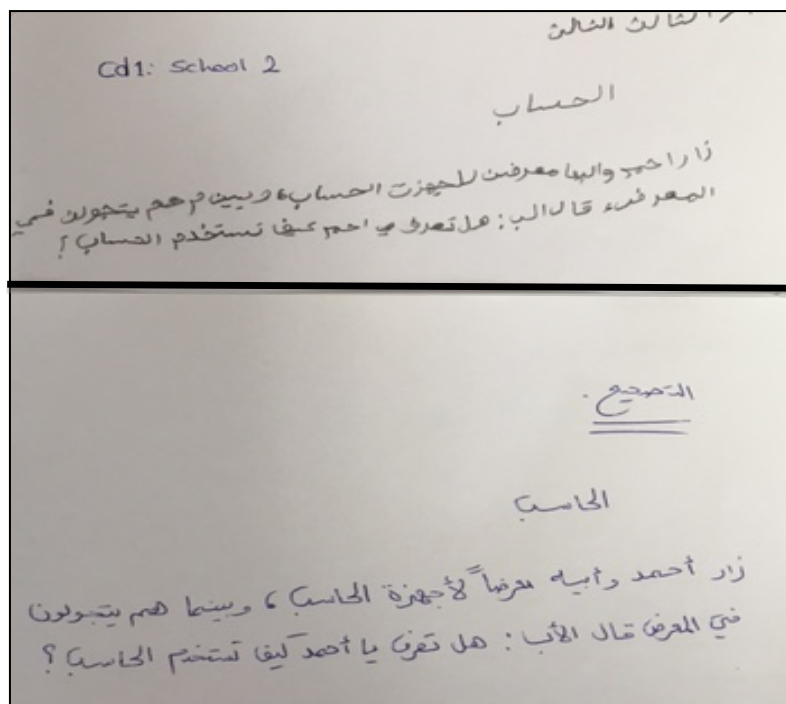
Cd1, School 1: literacy assessment in the resource room



Cd2, School 2: spelling assessment in the classroom



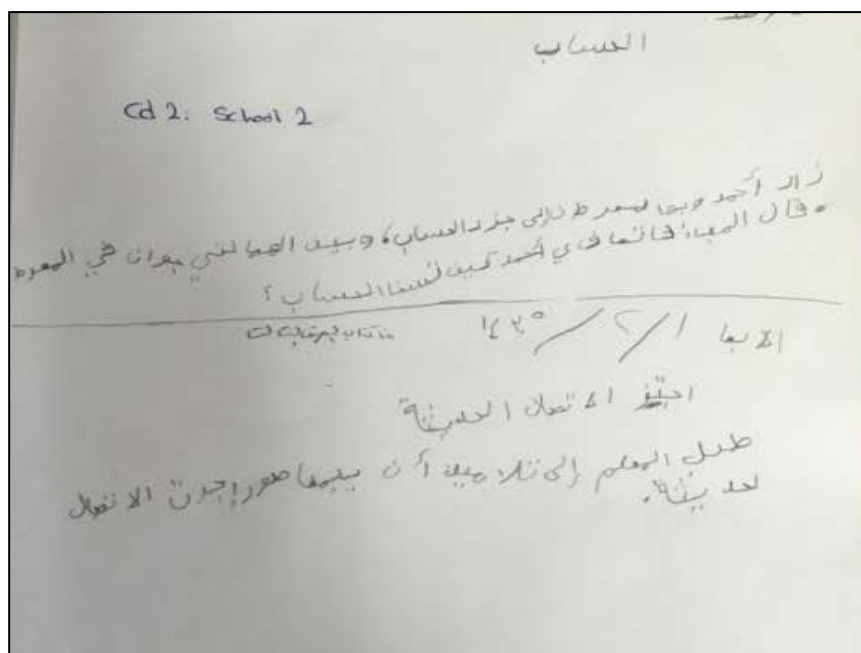
Cd2, School 2: spelling assessment in the resource room



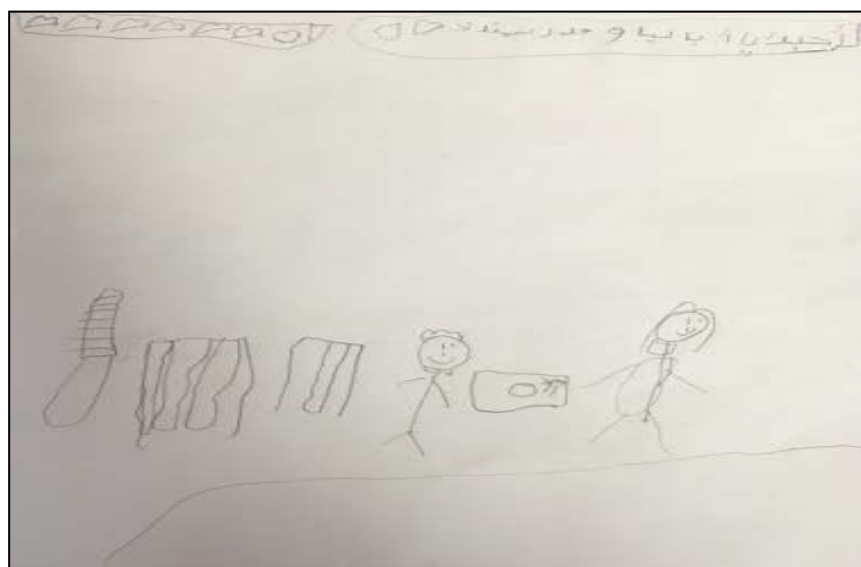
Cd1, School 2: spelling test and under the line is the correction



Cd1, School 2: drawing



Cd 2, School 2: spelling test



Cd 2, School 2: drawing

Appendix 23.2: An example of a student's file

The collage consists of eight photographs of a student's file, arranged in a 4x2 grid. The pages contain various forms, tables, and handwritten notes in Arabic.

- Top Left:** A form with a header section and a table with multiple columns and rows. Some fields are filled with handwritten text.
- Top Right:** A form with a header section and a table with multiple columns and rows. Some fields are filled with handwritten text.
- Second Row Left:** A form with a header section and a table with multiple columns and rows. Some fields are filled with handwritten text.
- Second Row Right:** A form with a header section and a table with multiple columns and rows. Some fields are filled with handwritten text.
- Third Row Left:** A form with a header section and a table with multiple columns and rows. Some fields are filled with handwritten text.
- Third Row Right:** A form with a header section and a table with multiple columns and rows. Some fields are filled with handwritten text.
- Bottom Left:** A form with a header section and a table with multiple columns and rows. Some fields are filled with handwritten text.
- Bottom Right:** A form with a header section and a table with multiple columns and rows. Some fields are filled with handwritten text.

Appendix 23.3: Examples of some the IEPs

[illegible]

School 1

[illegible]

School 2

Appendix 23.4: Classrooms' photos



A classroom: School 1



A classroom: School 2

Appendix 23.5: Resource rooms' photos



Resource Room: School 1



Resource Room: School 2

Appendix 24: Curriculums in KSA

PRIMARY EDUCATION

I. Primary School

Duration: Six years (ages 6 to 12)

Curriculum: Arabic, art education, geography, history, home economics (for girls), mathematics, physical education (for boys), Islamic studies and science

Leaving Certificate: *Shahadat Al Madaaris Al Ibtidaa'iyyah* (General Elementary School Certificate)

II. Intermediate School

Duration: Three years (ages 12 to 15)

General Curriculum: Arabic, art education, English, geography, history, home economics (for girls), mathematics, physical education (for boys), religious studies and science

Leaving Certificate: *Shahadat Al-Kafa'at Al-Mutawassita* (Intermediate School Certificate)

SECONDARY EDUCATION

I. General Secondary School

Duration: Three years (ages 15 to 18)

Compulsory Subjects: During the first year, students share a common curriculum, and in the final two years are divided into scientific and literary streams. Students scoring 60 percent in all first-year subjects may choose between the two streams. Those who score under 60 percent must opt for the literary stream.

General Curriculum: Arabic, biology, chemistry, English, geography, history, home economics (for girls), mathematics, physical education (for boys) and religious studies

Leaving Certificate: *Shahadat Al-Marhalat Al-Thanawiyyat* (General Secondary Education Certificate), awarded to students who successfully pass the *Tawjihi* (General Secondary Examination)

II. Religious Secondary School

Duration: Three years (ages 15 to 18)

Curriculum: Arabic language and literature, English, general culture, geography, history and religious studies

Leaving Certificate: *Shahadat Al Thanawiyyah Al 'Aama lil Ma'aahid Al Ilmiyya* (Religious Institute Secondary Education Certificate). Graduates are admitted to university in the humanities and social sciences only.

III. Technical Secondary School

There are three types of technical education offered at the secondary level: vocational/technical, commercial and agricultural. Admission to a technical school requires the *Shahadat Al-Kafa'at Al-Mutawassita* (Intermediate School Certificate). All technical and vocational training comes under the authority of the General Organization for Technical Education.

Duration: Three years (ages 15 to 18)

Curriculum:

Vocational/Technical: architectural drawing, auto mechanics, electricity, machine mechanics, metal mechanics, radio and television. In addition to technical subjects, students take Arabic, chemistry, English, mathematics, physical education, physics and religious studies

Commercial: Arabic, bookkeeping and accounting, commercial correspondence, economics, English, financial mathematics, general mathematics, geography, management and secretarial and religious studies.

Agriculture (partial listing): agricultural economics, agronomy, animal husbandry, applied biology, applied chemistry, applied mathematics, applied physics, Arabic, English, farm management, horticulture, religious studies, marketing and plant nutrition

Leaving Certificates:

Technical: *Diplom Al Madaaris Al Thanawiyyah Al Mihaniyyah* (Secondary Vocational School Diploma)

Commercial: *Diplom Al Madaaris Al Tijaariyyah* (Secondary Commercial School Diploma)

Agriculture: *Diplom Al Madaaris Al Ziraa'iyyah* (Secondary Agricultural School Diploma).

III. Further Technical and Vocational Training

Programs ranging between one and one-half-years are offered at vocational training centers. Admission to these programs requires five to six years of primary education.

Leaving Certificate: Vocational Training Certificate

Source: Ministry of education <http://www.moe.gov.sa/ar/Pages/default.aspx>